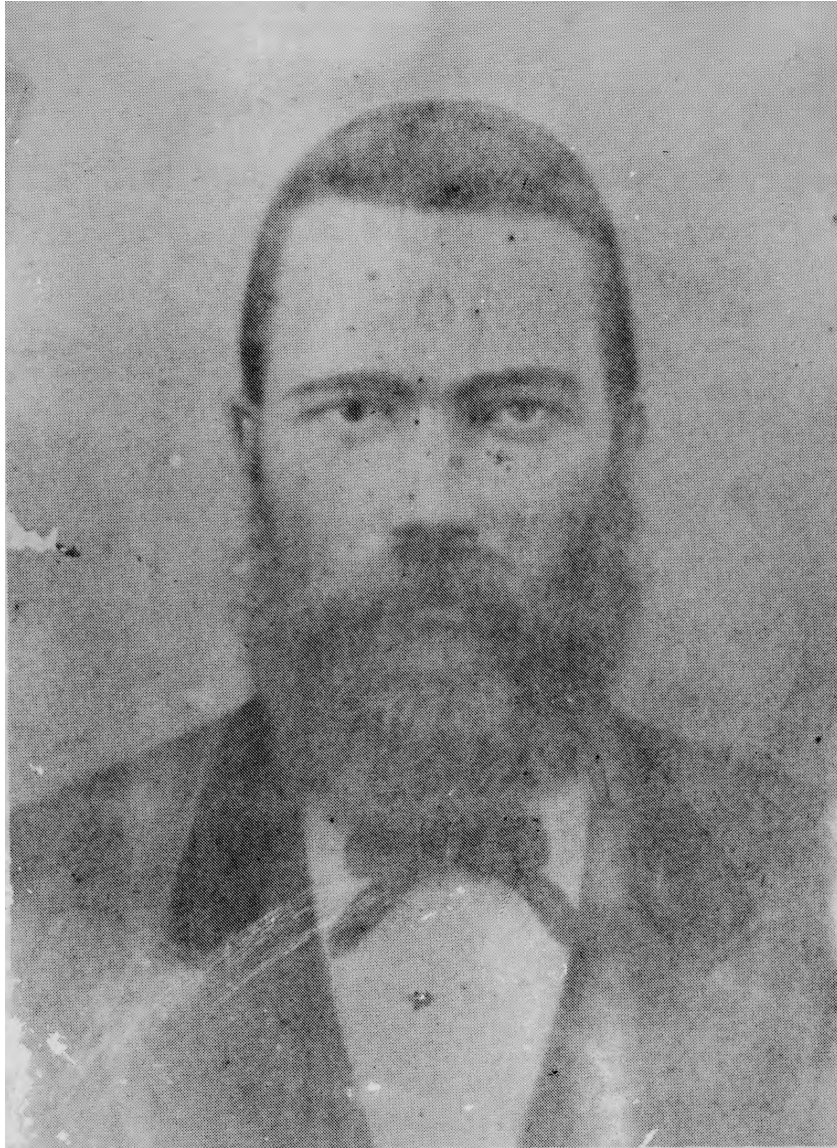


THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HENRY BERRY LOWRY

BY GARRY LEWIS BARTON



Photograph of Henry Berry Lowry

All photographs in this book courtesy of Mr. Elmer Hunt,
a talented Indian photographer and friend.

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By Garry Lewis Barton

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This book is dedicated to Doris, my darling companion; my mother, Bema Barton; my grandmother, Ada Locklear; my daughter Garyena Barton; and to my entire family.

Also dedicated to the memory of all those who have gone on before us. May we uphold our traditional ways and remember our past so that their struggles, sacrifices and tribulations will not have been in vain.

We cannot know where we are going if we do not know where we have been.

INTRODUCTION

By Lew Barton

That of the Indians of Robeson and adjacent counties of North (with one county, Dillon in South) Carolina is a local history of national and even international interest and significance. I see Henry Berry Lowry, guerrilla Indian warrior of Reconstruction, as their central figure. Certainly, he is their central hero, and Dr. Guy Owen of the NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE JOURNAL regards him as a folk hero who stands shoulder to shoulder with such folk heroes as Tom Dula, Daniel Boone and Blue Beard.

I see Henry Berry Lowry as one man waging guerrilla war against slavery, specifically the enslavement of Indian people.

While it isn't generally known that American Indians were enslaved as well as dispossessed of their lands, they were the first people some of whom were enslaved by European Americans. Christopher Columbus, in order to placate his complaining colonists, became the first European to practice slavery in America (North, South and Central).

Slavery became a burning issue for the Indians of North Carolina. In fact, Indian slavery was what the Tuscarora War of 1711-13 in southeastern North Carolina was all about.

I understand, however, that Indians did not make "good" slaves. They lacked the docility that marked the African race. I understand that they had the disconcerting habit of murdering a cruel slave-master occasionally while he slept. A major difference between the African and American races, as I have ascertained the matter, is that one ethnic group resisted slavery steadfastly while the other did not.

As late as the Civil War, attempts were being made to enslave American Indians. The attempt to conscript Robeson Indians into the malaria-infested slave camps of the Confederacy was interpreted by these Indians as an overt attempt to enslave them.

They were correct in their deductions. Had not the Confederacy lost the war to Union forces, and had not Henry Berry Lowry taken a stand against slavery insofar as our people were concerned, the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina, as we are officially known through an Act of Congress, we, along with our children, might very well be slaves today.

Yes, Henry Berry Lowry became an outlaw with a price on his head. But so, too, were the signers of the Declaration of Independence outside the law, so far as the ruling King of England, the mother country, was concerned. And had the

Revolutionary War been lost to England, all their heads undoubtedly would have ended up on the chopping block.

Yes, Henry Berry Lowry was an outlaw ... but not "just another outlaw." He laid his life and his fortune on the line for his people -- and for a noble ideal. That ideal is called freedom.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HENRY BERRY LOWRY, written by my son, Garry Lewis Barton, represents several years of intensive investigation. It is thorough, detailed and in-depth. Some portions of the work have appeared in THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE, a successful periodical edited and published by three of my children - Bruce Barton, Editor, Garry L. Barton, Associate Editor and Connee Brayboy, Associate Editor.

I proudly recommend this book to all serious students of North Carolina and American history, and to the layman, as well. It makes fascinating and informative reading. It is more meaty than anything I have come across on the subject.

Lew Barton, author of THE MOST IRONIC STORY IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

CHAPTER ONE

The Murders of James Putnum Barnes and James Brantley Harris

"We have always been friends of the white man. And we were free long before the white man came to America! We have, in fact, always been free; and, indeed, until 1835, owned slaves ourselves, just like the white man! ... When we moved to this section of the country, we fought for liberty for the white man; yet the white men whom we defended have turned upon us. They have taken away our right to vote, our right to attend school, and now our right to be free. Three of our young men lie dead for no reason other than that they did not wish to become slaves. ..."

("The Most Ironic Story in American History" by Lew Barton)

The eruption of the Civil War in 1861 precipitated in open, and oftentimes hostile confrontation between the Confederate white faction of the Robeson County population in North Carolina and their distinctively different brown-skinned neighbors, forefathers of the present-day Lumbee (River) Indians of North Carolina.

A great deal of animosity and ill-feeling existed between the two classes of people because of the whites' refusal to accept or acknowledge the Indians' proud and noble heritage.

The Indians boasted a proud heritage dating back to the first successful white settlement in the "New World." Oral tradition among them, substantiated by a number of learned scholars, attests to the fact that the Indians descended from Gov. John White's famous 119 "lost colonists" who, after fleeing the wrath of the fierce Indian chief Powhattan, were taken in by the friendly Hatteras Indians who inhabited Croatoan Island. According to this popular tradition, after intermarrying between the colonists and Indians a group of blond-haired, blue-eyed Indians were emanated. Present-day Lumbee Indians are lineal descendants of this group.

Instead of accepting this version of their origin, the Indians' white neighbors chose instead to answer the question of the Indians' dark skin by labeling them "mulattoes," "coloreds," or, many times, simply "niggers."

Because their ancestors had fought on the side of the white man in such wars as the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the proud Indians were more than

willing to enlist their services in the Confederate Army when the Civil War first erupted. Their efforts to enlist were thwarted by their white Confederate neighbors however.

The white planters argued that because of legislative action by the N.C. General Assembly in 1835, at which time certain constitutional laws were revised, Indians of Robeson and surrounding counties, as well as the Cherokee of mountainous western North Carolina, were recognized by the state as "free persons of color." As a result of their new status, their rights as free citizens were disenfranchised. They could no longer vote, they were not entitled to an education, and they were denied the right to own firearms without a special court permit.

A Confederate law stated, in essence, that all "free persons of color" would be called upon to perform such menial labor as deemed necessary for the success of the "cause." This law was used to bar the Indians from fighting alongside the whites as they were accustomed to doing.

They were drafted into labor battalions at Ft. Fisher, below Wilmington, instead where the South was in the process of constructing an elaborate and intricate system of forts around the mouth of the Cape Fear River. The purpose of this system of forts was to protect the invaluable port city of Wilmington, quite possibly the most important port city in the South. Manpower for work on these forts was extremely hard to come by. For this reason, the Confederate whites jumped at the chance to use the Indians in the labor battalions, pitting them alongside black-skinned slaves gathering timber and sod for the breast plates of the forts.

As an alternative to accepting such humiliating and demeaning treatment, many Indians of the conscription age took to the many dense, jungle-like swamps interspersed throughout Scuffletown (an area with hard-to-define boundaries, but generally understood to mean the many small townships in Robeson County during the Civil War period inhabited primarily by the Robeson County Indians). The Indians were pursued in the woods and swamps by a Home Guard detachment comprised of whites too old to serve in the army, or whites possessing some type of handicap prohibiting them from serving. The company of misfits was organized in order to maintain some semblance of law and order in the county while the more able-bodied whites were off fighting for the "cause." The popular practice of camping out in the woods and swamps to elude the Home Guard was known as "lying out."

The lying out Indians were soon joined in their swampy retreat by escaped Yankee soldiers from the nearby Confederate stockade in Florence, S.C. A handful of run-away black-skinned slaves also took advantage of the safety afforded by the dense, almost impenetrable woods and swamps interspersed throughout the Scuffletown area. The swamps were soon so over run by

desperadoes that they were forced to break up into smaller bands in order to better survive.

The term "Scuffletown" was said to have been coined by a Col. Vicks, for whom Vicksburg, Mississippi is named. Vicks was proprietor of a store in nearby Fair Bluff, also located in Robeson County. He patronized a combination grocery store/saloon run by James Lowry at Harper's Ferry. Vicks noted that one had to scuffle to survive among the "half-breeds" in the area after "they imbibed pretty freely of liquor."

All present-day Lowrys in Robeson and surrounding counties descended from the aforementioned James Lowry. His father, who was also named James, moved his family to Franklin County in North Carolina from Virginia when Virginia joined the Union. James (senior) was a judge while residing in Virginia.

James Lowry (junior) migrated to Robeson County from Franklin County and married a "half-breed Tuscarora Indian woman" named Sarah Kearsy. This couple had three sons: James, Thomas and William; and two daughters: Mary and Ceily. James, the youngest son, never married. Thomas married a white woman named Nancy Deas.

William was the oldest son, and the only one old enough to fight when the Revolutionary War began. He fought on the side of the colonists under the command of Col. Thomas Robeson, for whom Robeson County is named. He received a serious sword wound on his left hand which entitled him to government benefits, which he drew until the day of his death.

There exists a number of land grants made out to James Lowry, some signed by King George I and some by King George II. There also exists a joint land grant made out to James Lowry and Henry Berry. James Lowry (white) was related to Henry Berry (Indian) through marriage.

Among the names of Gov. John White's 119 "lost colonists" can be found 2 Berrys: Richard Berry and Henry Berry. Evidence strongly suggests that the Henry Berry named on the joint land grant along with James Lowry was a lineal descendant of the Henry Berry listed among the names of the "lost colonists."

As mentioned earlier, all present-day Lowrys descended from James Lowry. His father was named James. He also had a son named James. This is 3 generations of Lowrys represented with the same first name. The repetition of the first name among Lumbee (River) Indians was, and still is widely found. This fact adds support to the supposition that the two Henry Berrys are lineal descendants.

Another interesting fact surfaces when you intertwine Henry Berry's name with that of James Lowry. You come up with Henry Berry Lowry.

James Lowry died in 1810. His complete will follows.

“James Lowry, State of North Carolina, Robeson County, in the name of God, amen. I James Lowry, of the County and State aforesaid, though weak in body yet of a perfect mind and memory, blessed be God, do this thirteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ten, make this my last will and testament as follows: First I recommend my soul to Almighty God and my body to the earth. First I give and bequeath to my loving wife the plantation I now live on and the Negroes Peter, Dick, Beti, Fanny, Bole, and all the lands in my possession - but one hundred and twenty acres that my son Thomas lives on - also one hundred acres my son Thomas lives on - also one hundred acres that my son Wm. lives on - during her natural life - and after her death to my son James Lowry. I also give and bequeath to my son William Lowry the plantation he now lives at and all the cattles and hogs in possession at this time. I also give and bequeath to my son Thomas Lowry one hundred and twenty acres of land that he now lives on - I also give and bequeath to my daughter Mary the Negroes Violet and Harry. I also give and bequeath to my daughter Ceily the Negroes Tenney and Bevely. I also desire that all the stock of cattles, hogs, horses and sheep remain on the premises and if either of my daughters marries during their mother's life to death as she thinks proper. Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of us, Wallace Neil, Neil McNeil and Benit Locklear. James Lowry (his mark).”

During his lifetime, James Lowry had managed to amass a vast fortune which included in excess of 1,000 acres of land, plus a number of “Negroe slaves.” As his will bears evidence of, this vast wealth was handed down to his immediate family after his death. Consequently, by the advent of the Civil War, the Lowry family was one of the wealthiest families among the “free persons of color” in Robeson County.

After his father's death, William Lowry married Bettie Locklear, also said to be a “half-breed Tuscarora Indian woman.” William and Bettie Lowry had two sons directly involved in the Henry Berry Lowry saga: Henry Berry Lowry's father Allen, and Henry Berry's uncle George.

Allen Lowry, the oldest of William and Bettie Lowry's sons, and as previously mentioned Henry Berry's father, was sort of a community spokesman for the Indians of Scuffletown. He married Mary Cumba, a woman of “Portuguese extraction.” The couple settled on the south side of Back Swamp, an extensive swamp which ran parallel with Lumbee River (now renamed Lumber River) for some 20 miles. They erected a modest cabin and raised a large family of 12 - 10

boys and 2 girls. The boys were Patrick, Purdie, Andrew, Sinclair, William, Thomas, Stephen, Calvin, Murdock and Henry Berry. The girls were Purline and Sally Jane.

Old man Allen (he was 75 years of age in 1865) was a carpenter by trade, his customers including a number of wealthy white neighbors in the county. He was a good, peaceable citizen, well respected and liked by practically all who knew him. He was a God-fearing man who attended church on a regular basis. Allen and his brother George were the two most out-spoken adversaries against the practice of conscription (drafting the young Indian males and forcing them to work in inhumane conditions in the pest-infested labor battalions below Wilmington).

Four of Allen Lowry's sons were of the conscription age. They were William, Stephen, Thomas and Henry Berry. Because their father was one of the most outspoken adversaries against conscription, the Lowry boys were the most popular band of lying out desperadoes in the swamps. Because of this notoriety, almost every act of lawlessness that occurred during the Civil War period was accredited to the Lowry Gang.

Being disillusioned with the Confederacy because of its refusal to allow them to fight alongside the whites, Scuffletown Indians began harboring Union sympathy. As a result, the Lowry Gang found many Indians more than willing to join their ranks. Most of these, however, were related either by blood or marriage.

James Brantley Harris, an over-weight white liquor dealer, was named Confederate Conscription Officer of the Scuffletown area when the Civil War first erupted. He was furnished a Home Guard detachment whose duty it was to comb the woods and swamps in search of lying out Indians and escaped Yankee soldiers from the nearby Confederate stockade in Florence, S.C.

A brute of a man, Harris managed to swindle a number of Indian planters out of their lands. He would park his liquor wagon on the Indian's land and refuse to move on, maintaining possession by brute force -- or the prospect of using brute force. Most Indians owned their lands in common, without the use of land deeds or titles. Many times if an Indian purchased land and a deed or title was involved in the transaction, he would hang the deed on the wall or store it away until it was soon misplaced or forgotten. The lack of the use of land deeds and titles by the Indians made it extremely easy for greedy whites such as Harris to cheat them out of their lands.

A 230-pound bully, Harris, literally speaking, reigned supreme over Scuffletown. Everyone -- white, Indian and Black alike -- feared him. He had a vile and uncontrollable temper. Few dared cross him, and those who did seldom lived to repeat the mistake.

Many writers have labeled Harris one of the meanest, most oppressive, and over-abusive conscription officers in the South, especially in regard to the hapless lying out Indian males whom he detested.

Ironically, although he loathed the Indian males, the over-weight bully possessed an insatiable lust for the fair and beautiful Indian maidens in Scuffletown. He was seldom, if ever, seen while not in the company of one. His wife and children had little, if any, control or influence over him.

On one occasion, Harris found himself vying for the affections of the same Indian girl who was being courted by Wesley Lowry, George Lowry's son (making him Henry Berry's first cousin). In an attempt to achieve an edge over his younger and better-looking adversary, the obese Conscription Officer led his Home Guard detachment of misfits to the George Lowry homestead. He arrested Wesley and his younger brother Allen (who was named after his uncle). The boys' hands were tied secure behind their backs and they were herded off toward the Moss Neck depot where they were eventually loaded on a train and sent to the dreaded labor camps at Ft. Fisher. Jarman, their younger brother, was too young to be drafted.

The boys' father, George Lowry, became enraged. He let word spread throughout the Scuffletown area that the country was not large enough for both him and Harris. The white bully did not take the threat lightly.

Harris learned from a friend that George Lowry was supposed to visit a friend the next day and would not be returning until dusk-dark. The obese officer hid behind Lowry's well and waited impatiently. Around dusk-dark, true to his informer's word, a figure approached. "Who goes there?" Harris roared. "Lowry!" was the sole reply. Without further ado, Harris emptied both barrels of his shotgun into the hapless and unarmed victim. When the bloodied and lifeless body at his feet was checked, however, Harris realized that a deadly mistake had been made. The lifeless corpse was that of Jarman Lowry, George Lowry's youngest son.

No attempts were made by the authorities to bring Harris to trial for the senseless and cold-blooded murder of the youthful Jarman.

As time ensued, however, the white liquor dealer once again had cause to fear for his life. Wesley and Allen Lowry received a furlough to return home and visit their aging parents after surviving a year in the pest-infested slave labor battalions.

No doubt, the Lowry homestead was in a merry and jovial mood. Many Indian families witnessed their sons arrested and sent off to the dreaded labor camps. And many failed to see their sons return. In the labor camps work conditions were intolerable and inhuman. Many times the workers were forced to work in

waist-high waters while gathering timber and sod for the breast plates of the forts. Living conditions were subhuman, clothing inadequate. Rations were inadequate to sustain a man performing such tiring, menial tasks as involved in gathering timber and sod for the breast plates of the forts. Added to these maladies was the ever-present threat of disease. From 1862-1863 a yellow fever epidemic wiped out 10% of the inhabitants who refused to, or were not allowed to flee to healthier grounds. As a matter of fact, several sources allege that Wesley and Allen Lowry were allowed to return home because they came down with Yellow Fever.

So, quite naturally, a festive spirit prevailed at the Lowry family camp as the family welcomed Wesley and Allen home.

The obese Conscription Officer once again gathered his Home Guard detachment of misfits and made another unwelcomed visit to the George Lowry homestead. He informed the bereaved parents that their sons were once again under arrest, this time for deserting. The boys' hands were once again tied secure behind their backs, and they were once again herded toward the Moss Neck Depot.

As the company came within sight of the Moss Neck Depot, however, Harris turned his Home Guard detachment around with orders for them to return to headquarters at Buie's Store (which was located where the present-day Pembroke Park stands). "I can handle the prisoners from here," he informed them.

The boys' badly mutilated and pummeled bodies were later found by the roadside at approximately the same location where the Home Guard was turned back by Harris. When queried as to his charges' fate, the obese Conscription Officer simply shrugged and replied: "They made an attack upon me, but ... I killed them both right there with a lightwood knot."

Around the first of December, 1864 three Yankee soldiers escaped from the nearby Confederate stockade in Florence, S.C. and made their way to the extensive and jungle-like Back Swamp, the Lowry Gang's primary stomping grounds. In time, the three Union escapees, led by Capt. Owen T. Wright, crossed paths with the Lowry Gang which was then led by William Lowry. The notorious Lowry brothers took their newfound friends home to meet their aging father.

With the deaths of his young nephews fresh in his mind, old man Allen sent William, Stephen and Henry Berry to a bordering white neighbor's pasture where the neighbor, James Putnum Barnes, had some hogs grazing.

Barnes was head of the Court of Appeals which had the authority to exempt an Indian conscript from serving in the pest-infested labor camps at Ft. Fisher if

sufficient cause existed. Barnes and old man Allen were former hunting and fishing companions. A sort of feud had ensued between Barnes and the Lowrys, however, because of Barnes' refusal to exempt Wesley and Allen from being conscripted by Harris. The boys' father had appealed to Barnes, informing him that Harris' sole purpose for arresting them was to clear the way for him to court the beautiful Indian maiden. Barnes, known to have used his ability as a turkey hunter and marksman while helping track down lying out Indians, informed George Lowry that despite Harris' unscrupulous character and immoral motives it was his sons' duty to serve in the labor camps. In a sense, the Lowrys considered Barnes just as guilty as Harris for the murders of Wesley and Allen Lowry, as well as the cold-blooded murder of their young brother Jarman.

The three Lowrys loaded two of Barnes' fattest sows in their wagon. They returned to the old Allen Lowry homestead where the hogs were duly slaughtered and prepared. A fine feast was enjoyed by the Lowry household and their white guests. Afterwards, the Lowry Gang, along with the Union escapees, returned to the safety of the swamps.

In time, Barnes missed his hogs. He noticed wagon tracks leading to Allen Lowry's farm. Obtaining a search warrant, he accompanied High Sheriff Reuben King to the Lowry farm. A thorough search of the premises uncovered the freshly slaughtered heads of the hogs behind the smokehouse. The ears bore Barnes' brand. Barnes was furious. He knew, however, that the Lowry boys were the culprits.

Therefore, he refused to file charges against his former hunting and fishing companion. Before he left, however, he warned old man Allen that the next Lowry setting a foot upon his land would be shot on sight.

This latest incident only served to further strain relations between Barnes and the Lowrys. In the following months, relations continued to disintegrate. Whenever a Confederate command came scouring the Scuffletown area in search of hands to work in the labor camps at Ft. Fisher, Barnes would lead them to the old Allen Lowry homestead hoping to catch some or all of the Lowry brothers visiting their aging father and mother.

In addition to serving as head of the Court of Appeals, Barnes served as postmaster of Clay Valley, a small township located about a mile and a half from his residence which bordered Allen Lowry's on the south side of Back Swamp. He left home at approximately 9 o'clock in the morning, on December 21, 1864 on his way to work at Clay Valley. As he neared the halfway mark, the widower was felled by buckshot. The majority of the shots struck him about the upper torso. As he lay mortally wounded, the youthful Henry Berry rushed up to him with his gun cocked and aimed at his head. "Don't shoot me again!" Barnes pleaded with hands held imploringly up. "I will surely die from the wounds I've already received." The young Indian, hardened and conditioned by the three

years he was forced to hide out in the swamps, pulled the trigger. The bullets passed through Barnes' hands and knocked out several teeth and blew away a portion of his upper jaw.

Barnes was discovered shortly thereafter by Mr. Willis Moore and Mr. Archibald McNair, two local white planters who were accompanied by a number of black-skinned slaves. According to the account given by Moore and McNair, Barnes lingered just long enough, with a portion of his upper jaw blown away, to identify his assailant as Henry Berry Lowry before succumbing to the fatal shot gun wounds.

The Lowry Gang had avowed to wait and give the authorities a chance to bring Harris to trial for the brutal and sadistic murders of Wesley and Allen Lowry. After a considerable wait, however, they realized that the white county leaders were in no particular hurry to see justice prevail.

A preliminary hearing was held at the county courthouse in Lumberton to see if sufficient evidence existed to bring charges against Harris for the brutal murders of George Lowry's sons. The following speech, delivered by George Lowry to a restless and agitated Indian multitude in front of the Lumberton courthouse while the inquest was in process, best exemplifies the sentiments and feelings shared by the whole Indian camp.

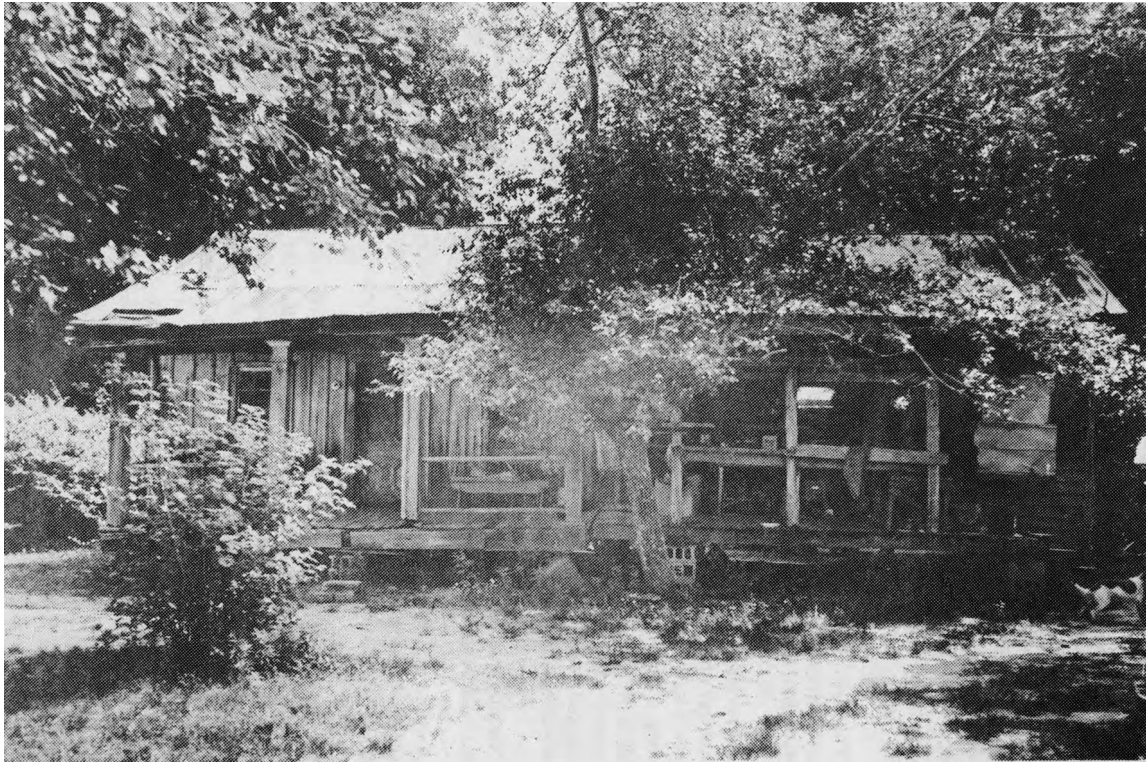
"We have always been friends of the white man," the bereaved father declared. "And we were free long before the white man came to America! We have, in fact, always been free; and, indeed, until 1835, owned slaves ourselves, just like the white man!"

The aged Indian father continued: "We once lived at Roanoke in Virginia; and when the Englishmen came there our tribe treated them very kindly. One of our tribe (Manteo) was taken to England on an English vessel and was privileged by the English to see their country. Our tribe has always been friendly with the white man; and we took the Englishmen who first came to America into our midst to live with us. In these veins is the blood of the first Englishmen in America as well as that of the first people to inhabit America. The Englishmen whom we befriended always told us that if we took up the ways of the white man we would prosper and be great like the English. And so we did. We have taken both the white man's language and the white man's religion. Yet we have come to this -- enslavement! Even in the wars between white men and Indians our people always fought side by side with the white man! When we moved to this section of the country, we fought for liberty for the white man; yet the white men whom we defended have turned upon us. They have taken away our right to vote, our right to attend school, and now our right to be free. Three of our young men lie dead for no reason other than that they did not wish to become slaves and build fortifications and make ammunition in the slave camp at Ft. Fisher!"

There was one white face among the Indian multitude. He was Hamilton McMillan, a lawyer from Red Springs. McMillan was moved very deeply by Lowry's words. He became interested in the plight of the Lumbee (River) Indians. In 1885 when he became a legislator he introduced legislation, which passed, designating Indians of Robeson and adjoining counties Croatan Indians of N.C. His reasoning was that the Lumbee (River) Indians descended from the Hatteras Indians who inhabited Croatoan Island. Also, \$500 was appropriated to begin a school for the Indians. Out of this \$500 appropriation sprang forth what is today Pembroke State University.

Probable cause was found at the inquest to issue a warrant for Harris' arrest, charging him with murder. A warrant was issued Friday, January 13, 1865. Henry Berry Lowry and the Lowry Gang had no faith in the judicial system in Robeson County, however. Sunday, January 15 arrived and they noticed that Sheriff Reuben King had no intentions, whatsoever, of carrying out the court order to arrest Harris. For this reason, the Lowry Gang felt compelled, once again, to resort to the only version of justice they felt existed for Indians and Blacks during those turbulent times, namely their Henry and Spencer rifles.

Sunday, January 15, 1865 Harris had just dropped off an Indian maiden after enjoying a leisurely Sunday stroll with her in his buggy. He advanced but a short distance before the Sunday tranquility was interrupted quite suddenly by an ear-shattering barrage of gunfire. The man, who one source described as being "feared by all who knew him ...," fell to the floor of his buggy. His horse raced instinctively for home. As the horse and buggy reached the outskirts of Harris' land, the obese and lifeless body fell from the buggy. And so perished quite possibly the meanest white man to ever settle in Robeson County.



The old Allen Lowry homestead, as it appears today, where Henry Berry Lowry was raised along with his 9 brothers and 2 sisters.

CHAPTER TWO

Allen & William Lowry Executed by White Vigilante Group

"I am said to be the son of Allen Lowery and brother of William Lowery. On 3rd March, 1865 William Lowery had 3 trunks in Allen Lowery's house ... When we got to McKenzie's he [McKenzie] claimed the gun [which William Lowry was working on when arrested at Allen Lowry's] as his, he having got it from Mr. Parsley. He said it was taken from his house when robbed. I don't know that anybody claimed the gun afterwards."

(Testimony by Calvin Lowry to Rev. James Sinclair, local justice of the peace)

Although Confederate Conscription Officer James Brantley Harris had few friends -- Indian, Black or white -- local white county leaders felt they could not sit idle and let this latest show of defiance to their authority go unchallenged. It was unheard of during the chaotic Civil War period for an Indian or Black to speak back to a white, much less raise a hand against one. Yet, here was a clear example of insubordination: Henry Berry Lowry was charged with murdering two prominent white figures. According to the whites' warped mentality during this period of time, whites were the superior race. Non-whites' sole purpose for existing was to cater to their every need.

The Confederate whites in Robeson knew as early as January 1865 that they were fighting a losing battle. They saw a way to use the killings of James Brantley Harris and James Putnum Barnes to their advantage; by punishing the most popular, and well known Lowry Gang for these murders, the Confederate whites could convey a warning to the "mulattoes" and "niggers." Let them know that despite the outcome of the war the lowly "mulattoes" and "niggers" would be expected to "stay in their place," which just happened to be at the bottom rung of the Robeson County societal ladder.

The Lowry Gang was expecting the whites to retaliate. They were determined to meet this show of strength by the whites with a full arsenal of weapons at their disposal. In order to acquire the much-needed firearms and ammunition, the Lowry Gang, aided by a handful of escaped Yankee prisoners from the nearby Confederate stockade in Florence, S.C., began a series of raids on local, wealthy, white planters. On these raids they concentrated on firearms, ammunition and food. Also, on these raids, the Lowry Gang remained on the

outside while the escaped Yankee soldiers did the actual plundering. This was to keep their white neighbors from recognizing them. The Yankees would hand the plunder out the window to the waiting Lowrys who would load it on the wagons.

One of the first homes robbed openly by the Lowry Gang and cohort after the murder of Harris was the Jackson Townsend farm.

Richard Townsend, Jackson's brother, had been robbed by a lone white thief December 14, 1864.

Mr. Jackson Townsend was off fighting for the "cause." Mrs. Townsend heard a disturbance on the porch. Looking out the window, she saw a white man standing at the window on the porch. The white man raised the window. Mrs. Townsend lowered it back down. The white intruder then used his gun and pried the window up again. He entered the dwelling through the window. He took a gun, plus other things of value, joined five waiting companions on the porch and left.

A few nights later the raiders returned to the Jackson Townsend home. This time the white man was accompanied by a heavy-set white man. They asked Mrs. Townsend if she had any wine. She had two containers. One of these, she explained, was for sickness. The two whites took the containers of wine out on the porch and shared the wine with their companions. After drinking their fill, the wine containers were returned. The whites asked Mrs. Townsend if she had a horse and buggy. She said she did and went out to the barn to show them. The horse and buggy proved unsuitable for their needs however. They left.

The raiders returned to Richard Townsend's farm and took his horse and wagon, and a Black slave to drive for them. They took the horse and wagon and went to the farms of Joseph Thompson and Henry Bullock, Jr. At each farm, the plunder was loaded in the wagon. After depositing the plunder in a secret cave used to store their arms and ammunitions, the wagon and horse were returned to Richard Townsend's.

Mrs. Martha Ashley and David Townsend were also robbed around this time.

The largest portion of this rash of break-ins was carried out in the month of February, 1865.

Near the end of February, 1865 the Lowry Gang and cohort went to the home of Robert McKenzie, a prominent white planter who lived about one mile from the old Allen Lowry homestead. The Gang shouted for McKenzie, who was sitting around the fireplace with his family, to open the door. The prosperous white planter ignored their demand. The Gang broke down the door and rushed in. They ransacked the house, rifling through drawers and trunks. Unable to find anything of value, the robbers demanded that McKenzie tell them where his money and valuables were hidden. When he refused, the Lowry Gang placed a

noose around his neck and turned to his wife. "If you don't tell us where your husband hid his money," they informed her, "we'll take him outside and hang him." They started out the door with the noose still around McKenzie's neck. Her cries of appeal, however, caused the men to take the noose from around McKenzie's neck. They placed everything of value they could carry into the wagon and left.

On the night of February 28, 1865 the homes of Daniel Baker, McKay Sellers and William A. Sellers were raided. Mr. Dougald McCallum's was also raided in the month of February. After leaving McCallum's, Mr. John McCallum's plantation was also robbed. Robert Graham's farm was also raided on the same night.

As a result of this rash of break-ins, the white citizenry were terror-stricken. At nights they would huddle around their fireplaces expecting any moment to become the next victims.

One of the most successful plantations in Robeson County during the Civil War period was the Argyle Plantation, located near Shoeheel (now the city of Maxton). Argyle was tilled by approximately thirty Black slaves and was owned by the widow Elizabeth Ann McNair, one of the warmest friends and supporters of the

Confederacy. Her only child, Harlee (17), died as an artilleryman at one of the Cape Fear forts.

March 1. 1865 the Lowry Gang raided Argyle. At the time of the raid, two families of kinsmen were residing at Argyle. Two Confederate "gentlemen friends" were also guests that particular night. A gun battle ensued between the intruders and the occupants of Argyle. Nevertheless, the Lowry Gang managed to enter the large plantation. When they neared the widow's personal bedroom, however, the Gang met firm resistance in the form of gunfire coming from within the bedroom. The gunfire probably was from a lieutenant from Fayetteville whom the widow knew intimately. The other one of her "gentlemen friends" hid in the closet throughout the shooting spree.

Capt. Owen T. Wright, ranking officer among the three escaped Yankee soldiers, was wounded during the exchange of gunfire. The widow and company were finally subdued. The Widow McNair boasted of being the one who fired the shots that felled Capt. Wright. William Lowry, then leader of the Lowry Gang, slapped the proud and boastful widow. An escaped Yankee interceded on the widow's behalf, preventing William from doing her further bodily harm.

The Lowry Gang took the widow's wagons and teams and a number of slaves to drive for them. They then proceeded to load the wounded Wright in one and the plunder taken from the vast plantation in the others.

Capt. Wright was deposited for safe keeping several miles from Argyle with the widow Amanda Nash, a school teacher known to possess Indian sympathy. The horses and wagons were returned to Argyle the next day at dawn.

After the raid on Argyle, some of the widow McNair's kin and friends reorganized the Home Guard which had been inactive since its leader, James Brantley Harris, had been killed. One of the widow's friends from Richmond County, Capt. Hugh McGregor, was named to replace Harris as head of the Home Guard. At the same time, Robert McKenzie was busy organizing the many white local planters who had been robbed by the Lowry Gang.

The two large followings joined forces. All together, the large mass of whites numbered in excess of 100, all armed and angry.

In days past, a sort of word-of-mouth telegraph system existed among the Indians of Scuffletown. Whenever the Home Guard, or some other danger, was in the area, the Lowry Gang would be informed via word-of-mouth of the danger's whereabouts. The white vigilante group knew that some type of plan would have to be arrived at in order to combat this successful grapevine system.

The white posse decided to break up into several smaller bands. The separate bands would scour the Scuffletown area, striking simultaneously, arresting every Lowry, or anyone thought to be guilty of aiding the Lowry Gang, on sight. In this manner, the effectiveness of the word-of-mouth grapevine would be greatly diminished.

The plan worked. A number of Lowrys, and their friends, were arrested by the white vigilante groups.

Calvin Lowry, one of Henry Berry Lowry's brothers, was one of the many Lowrys captured by the large white posse. Since the Indians knew the war was nearing an end, many Indians, like Calvin, had ventured out into their fields once again. Calvin was one of the fortunate few Indians in the Scuffletown area who had managed to hold on to his lands. He had 350 acres of land left from the James Lowry estate.

The following account of what transpired following his arrest is presented in Calvin Lowry's own words. The bulk of this testimony is taken from Calvin Lowry's testimony before the Freedmen's Bureau in Lumberton in 1867 when William and Allen Lowry's deaths were investigated by William Birnie, local agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. It should be noted that Calvin Lowry was one of the very few Indians living during the chaotic Civil War period who could read or write.

“There was a company of men came to my place on 3rd March 1865. I was out in the field at work. I saw them coming and went to

meet them. Part of them was in my house and yard before I got there searching the house. When I got there they had taken a shot gun out and [a] gourd of powder and wanted to know who I was. I said I was a Lowery and they said I was bad stock and wanted to know in knew anything about the robbing that was going on through the country. I told [them] I heard it was going on but did not know who it was. They wanted to know if I knew anything about the Union prisoners and if I was harboring them. I don't recollect whether I told them I had seen them but had not been harboring them. They searched the smoke house and wanted to know if I fattened all that meat. I told them I did. They acknowledged that they reckoned I did. Said they wanted me to go with them."

Robert McKenzie's smokehouse had been robbed of 1500 pounds of meat when robbed, supposedly, by the Lowry Gang the last of February. This explains the interest of the company of whites in Calvin Lowry's full smokehouse.

"We started down to Allen Lowery's and in going on they saw my rifle which I carried down in the field to shoot crows and took that. Allen Lowry was at work at his own fields and [they] took him along and went on to his place. And when I got down there William was there. They wanted to know of Allen & William Lowery if they had been in the robbing or if they knew anything about [it]. They denied being in the robbing. They then wanted to know if they had not been harboring the Yankees or Union prisoners. They said they hadn't been harboring them. They took the barrel of a shotgun from William Lowery. They then made him go and get the stock out of Allen Lowry's crib. William Lowery said it was a shot gun a man carried there for him to put a tube in."

The following testimony was given to James Sinclair, a local justice of the peace in Lumberton who was thought to be a friend of the Indians, by Calvin Lowry:

"I am said to be the son of Allen Lowery and brother of William Lowery. I had two guns in my possession and had no license from the court to carry them. On 3rd March, 1865 William Lowery had 3 trunks in Allen Lowery's house. It is one part of the process of putting a tube in a gun to hide the stock in the crib [or] under the piazza. When we got to McKenzie's, he [McKenzie] claimed the gun [which William was working on when arrested] as his, he having got it from Mr. Parsley. He said it was taken from his house when robbed. I don't know that anybody claimed the gun afterwards."

The Indians had a reason for dismantling a shotgun, rifle, etc., and hiding the various parts at different hiding places on the farm. Indians had to have a special court permit to own a firearm of any type. The whites would have to catch the

Indian with the gun intact to press charges against them for possessing unauthorized firearms.

Lowry's testimony before the Freedmen's Bureau continues:

“They took a demijohn with some brandy in [it] out of the house and wanted to buy it but Allen Lowery refused to sell it. They then drank it anyhow. Then they searched the house, took William Lowery's 3 trunks, all of his clothes, or about so, and his rifle, put them in a cart and took William Lowery's horse and put in it. And [they] tied me and William Lowery together and took my mother and father and all the family and carried us all down to Sinclair Lowery's. Part of the crowd had been there and searched the house when we got there. They then carried us all down to McKenzie's. Robert McKenzie asked Allen & William Lowery if he hadn't told them if they didn't bring up their boys so that he could take them off to the batteries they would get into trouble.” Allen Lowry told McKenzie that his boys were all grown, and no longer answered to him. McKenzie also told Sinclair that he would clear him of being shot if he would work for him six months for nothing. “McKenzie asked Allen Lowery if he [Allen Lowry] had not threatened his life. He said he had not, then McKenzie remarked that he was a liar for John Purcell told him he had. Allen Lowery asked McKenzie to send for John Purcell.

“Then they searched us all, took our knives and pocket books. [Me and] William Lowery, both being tied together, went to the well after water, accompanied by 3 or 4 men. After we got our water, William Lowery and myself stepped to a fence nearby. William pulled a small dirk out of his pantaloons and cut the rope and run. One man popped a cap at him as he turned the corner of the house. They then jumped over the fence and run into the field where they could see him and fired on him. I thought it was Capt. Baker fired. They then cried out they had him and went on down there and got him. Someone wanted to know who it was shot. They said Capt. Baker as well as I understood it, then said call no names. Then [they] carried me on back to where the company was outside of the yard and handcuffed me and my father Allen Lowery together, brought William Lowery up where Mr. Coble questioned him very close about the Yankees and robbers. William denied knowing anything about them, and he [Coble] told him he had better tell the truth [for] his time was short and not to go off with a lie in his mouth. They then held some kind of court, then took me loose from Allen Lowery, carried us all except Allen Lowery and William and shut us up in the smokehouse.”

At the “some kind of court” it was decided that the four Lowrys -- Allen Lowry and his 3 sons: Calvin, Sinclair and William -- would be executed for being implicated in the robbing throughout the area, and for harboring Yankee soldiers. Hector J. McLean, a white squire and friend of the Lowrys, informed Rev. Coble that only 2 of the Lowrys actually resided at the home where “clearly defined plunder was found.” (Actually, the only incriminating evidence found was the shotgun that William was allegedly working on when arrested on the porch of Allen Lowry's home). The “court” decided then that Calvin and Sinclair's lives would be spared, and they would only execute the 75-year-old Allen and his 36-year-old son William who, allegedly, was leader of the Lowry Gang.

George Dial, an Indian who was also locked up in Robert McKenzie's smokehouse, saw someone “put a spade and a shovel in the cart.” The cart belonged to Robert McKenzie, as did the mule.

Calvin Lowry's testimony continues: “After a short time they got a mule and cart and put Allen and William into it, and carried them off. When they returned one or two of the men told me they had killed them. I think Maj. McLean told me so. I think Mr. Coble told me so. I am not positive.”

Emanuel Fulmore, a Black slave belonging to McKenzie, was ordered to drive the cart which carried Allen & William Lowry to their fate. When questioned concerning the two Indians' fate at the 1867 investigation by the Freedmen's Bureau, Fulmore testified as follows:

When asked: “State the names of the men who appeared to be most active and controlled the others in the company at Robert McKenzie's in March 1865 when Allen and William Lowry were taken off to be shot in the cart you drove?”,

Fulmore answered: “Hugh McGreggor, Robert McKenzie and (Murdoc) McRae.”

When asked: “How many men were present when Allen and William Lowry were shot?”,

He answered: “Over 20.”

“Do you recollect the names of any of them present when they were shot?”

“I only recollect the following persons as being present when William and Allen Lowry were shot: J.H. Coble, Hugh McGreggor, Robert McKenzie, Murdoc McRae, and Mr. McCrimmon.”

The Black slave was then queried: “Were you ordered by anyone to dig the grave?”

His reply: "Yes sir. Some of the company commenced to dig the grave and called me up to help them."

He was then asked: "How often were Allen and William Lowry fired upon?"

"There were two rounds fired at them by about twenty men and Allen and William Lowry was badly shot in the face and breast."

"Did any of the company threaten you if you said anything about this?"

"Yes sir. They said if I would say anything about it they would do me in the same way."

"How far were you off when they were shot?"

"About twenty-five yards."

"Who had muskets at the time of the shooting?"

"I saw Robert McKenzie, Hugh McGregor, Murdoc McRae and Mr. McCrimmon with guns."

When Rev. Coble's name was not mentioned, the former slave was asked: "What part did Rev. Coble take at the place Allen and William Lowry were shot?"

Fulmore answered: "He prayed with them and did not have any gun with him."

"Were you acquainted with Allen and William Lowry and if so what was their character?"

"Yes sir," Fulmore replied. "I knew them very well, and their character was good and honest. But the company accused William Lowry of being into a company of Yankee Robbers and Allen Lowry knew about it and did not report it."

In closing, Fulmore was asked: "Was General Sherman's Army near when Allen and William Lowry were shot?"

"Yes Sir. They were shot on Friday and on the following Monday Gen. Sherman's Army came within a few miles of the place where they were shot."

Calvin Lowry's testimony resumes: "They wanted me to go off with them to hunt camps but it rained so we did not go till next morning."

The following testimony was given by Calvin Lowry at a separate investigation. A white clerk of court wrote down his testimony. This explains the term "colored" appearing next to each Indian's name.

Calvin Lowry testified "that on 4th March Robert McKenzie asked Calvin Lowry if they had told him what they had done with Allen and William Lowry. Calvin said he heard they had killed them. And Robert McKenzie said yes they had killed them and buried them. That they again tried to get Calvin Lowry to tell where the camps of the Union soldiers were. And as he could not give them any information, one of the company, Roderick McMillan (later to become high sheriff of Robeson County), went at him with his bayonet. And Hector Mclean stopped him and took hold of the bayonet. That then the following named members of the company took Calvin Lowry and handcuffed him and George Dial (colored) together, and went in search of the camps of the Union soldiers. Viz: Capt. H. McGreggor, Capt. Archie McCrimmon, Rev. J.H. Coble, John Patrick Smith, Hector J. Mclean, and others whose names he does not recollect."

Calvin Lowry's testimony before the Freedmen's Bureau in 1867 continues:

"[They] handcuffed me and George Dial together and carried us along. When they got against my house they stopped. Part of the crowd, some 8 or 10 men, went to the house. My wife had locked up the house and gone off. They broke open the back door of the dwelling house, broke open my dairy, and also some of the gable ends of the smokehouse was broken. Also broke down the crib door and when they came back [they] said they had found [everything] all right. Then we went on and came to a small cave under the ground that George Dial said he would carry them to. Then they came back to the road and went on to Mrs. Nash's above there. This I think was on Saturday. Capt. McCrimmon took some of the men and went into the house [and] found a sick Yankee there. He came back and reported that she [Mrs. Nash] would not let him take him out of the house."

The Rev. C.M. Pepper was boarding at Mrs. Nash's at the time. In a statement Rev. Pepper noted:

"On the next morning [the preceding evening Mrs. Nash had been visited by the Lowry Gang who had just returned from raiding Argyle], to our surprise, we were informed by the negroes that they [the robbers] had left one of their number in the negro cabin sick, and requested Mrs. Nash, through the servants, to let him stay there until he would get well. Mrs. Nash went out to see and speak with him. He told her that he had been with the robber gang only for concealment and sustenance; that he had never joined with them in their marauding operations, as he was taken sick the first night he reached Allen Lowrie's, and had been sick up to that time. He also told her that he was one of the escaped Yankee prisoners from Florence [escaped from the Confederate stockade there] and was

with the band because he had nowhere else to go. He gave his name as Owen T. Wright. He had with him a Bible, which had the appearance of having been much used. His plausible story was received by Mrs. Nash, who began at once to sympathize with him. She had the negroes to wash and dress him in clean clothes, carry him into her dwelling house and put him in a comfortable bed. This was scarcely done before the house was surrounded by a company of armed men, who proved to be the Home Guard. I walked out and spoke to one of them in the yard. He asked me hurriedly about the Yankee. I stated to him the facts of the case, and others coming up and hearing my statement, rushed to the room where the invalid Yankee was, and I suppose would, but for the interposition of the kind lady, have put an end to his life without taking him out of sight of the house. Pocahantas-like Mrs. Nash plead for his life and stood between him and destruction until the excitement had subsided."

Calvin Lowry's 1867 testimony continues:

"We marched around the field down against the house and they all stopped and agreed to go and take him out or kill her. They went to the house and she agreed to give him up. (They) got a cart and took him to McKenzie's. Stayed there all night."

The next morning, March 5, 1865, Rev. J.H. Coble and Capt. Hugh McGregor came into the smokehouse. Rev. Coble read the law to Calvin Lowry and the remaining prisoners. The law, in essence, was that if they fed or harbored any more Union prisoners, or gave a deserter a meal, or if there was any more mischief in the neighborhood, no matter who was responsible, they would all have to suffer for it.

After reading the law to the prisoners, they were all, with the exception of Calvin Lowry, allowed to leave the cramped quarters of McKenzie's smokehouse. Those who were locked up in the smokehouse during the 2-day ordeal were: Calvin Lowry, his brother Sinclair, his mother Mary, his sisters Sally Jane and Purline, 2 Indian friends: George Dial and John Sampson, and Anne Locklear, an Indian girl who was visiting in the Allen Lowry home when the round-up of suspects occurred.

Calvin Lowry was ordered to drive a cart with the wounded Owen T. Wright in it to Lumberton. A guard accompanied him. The Yankee escapee was delivered to Neadham Thompson, enrolling officer in Lumberton, who declared when delivered the charge: "I don't know why they brought him here. They ought to have left him along the road somewhere." After Calvin returned from delivering Wright, he was allowed to return to his home.

To add validity to Calvin Lowry's account, George Dial's brief testimony is presented. Dial testified October 19, 1867. Notice how both accounts agree in detail.

It should be noted that George Dial could not read or write. Nor could the vast majority of Indians during the Civil War period. Dial's transcript of his testimony was written by a white clerk of court. This accounts for the word "colored" appearing next to each Indian's name.

"George Dyal (colored) citizen of Robeson County states that a company of men under command of Archie McCrimmon and Hugh McGreggor came to him on the public road within about fifteen miles of Lumberton, N.C. about the first of March 1865 and arrested him and took him over to Robert McKenzie's. That at Robert McKenzie's one of the company shot William Lowry but did not kill him. They, the company, put him, Dyal, in a smokehouse at night. The next day they tied him and Calvin Lowry, colored, together, and took them to hunt camps where the deserters were lying out. And at night the company put him and Calvin Lowry back into the smokehouse. That the next morning they took him out and blindfolded him, and Roderick McMillan took a bayonet and jabbed and stuck the point of [it] in him ... [,] Robert McKenzie asking him at the same time where his things were that had been stolen from him. McKenzie and Hugh McGreggor said they were going to kill him [Dyal] and put him in the hole with Allan and William Lowry whom they had killed the day before which was Friday. That Hector J. Mclean interceded for Dyal, and the company let Dyal go on the next morning saying if they heard any more they would kill him. That the Yankees were close by when he was let go out of the smokehouse as he heard the firing distinctly. That after William Lowry was shot at McKenzie's but not killed, and while he, Dyal was holding William Lowry in his lap, Rev. J.H. Coble came to William Lowry and told him to tell all about the robbing throughout the settlement and not to die with a lie in his mouth. But William Lowry denied knowing anything about it. That while he, Dyal was at Robert McKenzie's house he saw Anglish Leich put a spade and shovel in a cart with Allan and William Lowry and Emanuel Fulmore, colored, was ordered by the company to drive the cart. The company went off with Allan and William Lowry and shortly afterwards firing was heard close by. This was, on Friday, when the company returned Robert Mclean came to the smokehouse and told Mary Lowry, the wife of Allan Lowry and mother of William Lowry, that they had killed them [Allan and William]. That the following persons appeared to be the most active men in the company and to control the balance: Robert McKenzie. Archibald McCrimmon, Hugh McGreggor, Murdoc McRae, but the following

persons were also in the company: Duncan Monroe, Ed Wilkerson, Anglish Leich, John Walker, John Patrick Smith, Malcolm Monroe, John McLaughlin, Rob McNair, Rory McNair, John Patterson, and over a hundred others whose names he does not know or recollect. That he does not know which of the company shot and killed Allan and William Lowry as he was locked up in the smokehouse."

After murdering old man Allen Lowry and his son William, the local white planters attempted to exonerate themselves of all guilt and responsibility. The following news article was written by a New York Herald reporter in 1871. It clearly shows that the whites held old man Allen and the Lowrys in contempt.

"One evening at Lumberton I sat in the office of Judge Leech, half a dozen gentleman [sic] present, and they described old Allen Lowery. The disposition generally manifested by the white people of Robeson County is to put little stress upon the murder of this old man, but to ascribe the crimes of Henry Berry Lowery's band to lighter cause and to separate the motive of revenge altogether from his offenses.

"The Lowerys,' said one of the persons present, 'were always savage and predatory. By conducting a sort of swamp or guerilla war during the Revolution they accumulated considerable property, and at the close of the war were landholders, slaveholders and people of the soil. Then they grew dissipated during the time of peace, and their land was levied upon to pay debts. Being Indians, with an idea that their ancestors held all this land in fee simple, they could not understand how it could be taken from them, and for years they looked upon society as having robbed them of their patrimony.'

"Yes,' said one present. 'Allen Lowery brought me a case against a man who wished to sell a piece of property he had formerly owned, and he couldn't be made to understand that the man had a good title to it. When they were holding the examinations, just before they shot him in 1865 the old man pleaded in extenuation of the plunder found in his house that he had never been given fair play but had been cheated out of his land. He said that his grandfather had been cut across the hand in the Revolution, fighting for the State, and that the State had cheated all his family. He had the Indian sentiment deep in him, of having suffered wrong, and imparted it to all his sons. Here is Sink (Sinclair) Lowery with the same kind of notions to this day. He said a little while ago, 'We used to own all the country round here, but it was taken from us somehow.'

"He was a good carpenter,' said another, 'and brought all his boys up industriously. He built this office in which we sit. He had a peculiar kind of eyes; they would prowl around your face until you got off your guard and then he would give you a piercing look through and through. He had a heap of mixed white and Indian pride, but I believe he was whipped at the whipping post once for pilfering, but that was so far back in his youth that nobody remembered it except by tradition. His son, Sinclair, married a white woman. The Lowerys and Oxendines were generally accounted the highest families in Scuffletown.'

"Well,' chimed in another voice, 'he was considerable of a heathen and never went much to church except very late in life, when he became a Methodist classleader. Old Allen married a girl early in life and had one child, but being indifferent or disappointed about her, he wandered off two years to South Carolina, and when he returned, without divorce or notice of any sort, he married a different woman.'

"Taking example from him the first wife also married a new man. By the second wife old Allen Lowery had all these children. Nobody ever had any complaint to make of him or his boys until the murder of Barnes, eight years ago."

When Owen T. Wright, the wounded Yankee escapee was left in Neadham Thompson's care, he was induced, probably by torture and threats, to release the names of the Indian families who helped him when he made his way to the swamps interspersed throughout Scuffletown. Under Thompson's heavy-handed interrogation, Wright also told him that there were "25 or 30 concealed guns" at Sinclair Lowry's farm. Sinclair's mother, Mary Cumbo, had moved in with him after her husband and son were murdered. Sinclair was not suspected of belonging to the Lowry Gang.

On April Fool's Day, 1865, Thompson, along with approximately 20 bitter whites, surprised Sinclair at his home. He was told of the allegations. The Indian denied knowing anything about any hidden guns on his land. The angry mob began searching the premises. Feeling safe in the knowledge that the search would be in vain, Sinclair remained inside his house. Suddenly, he heard the loud report of gunfire.

Instinctively, Sinclair checked to see if his family was safe inside. He was saddened to realize that his mother was missing. Despite the threat of gunfire, Sinclair raced out of the house and in the direction of the gunfire. He was met by a Home Guard member who requested that he follow him back to the house to get some water for a sick person. Going with the white back to the house to get the water, Sinclair followed him through the woods. He spotted his mother trying

feebly to walk about 200 yards from the house. She was off the road, trying desperately to walk. He rushed to her side. She threw her arms around his neck. He gingerly sat her down and allowed her to rest. In time he tried to get her to walk again. The bereaved widow was so frightened, however, that she fainted. A blanket was brought from the house and she was carried inside the house and put to bed.

While Sinclair had thought his mother to be safe in the kitchen, a number of Thompson's men had sneaked in through the back door and took her out into the woods. The still grief-stricken widow was blindfolded and tied to a stake. She was told that she would be shot the same as her husband and son had been if she did not tell them where the guns were hidden, and where the Lowry Gang's secret camp was located. When she refused, Thompson shouted the order: "Fire!" The gunfire hit all about Mary Cumbo as was intended; the men only wished to frighten her into talking. Mary Cumbo had fainted from fright, however. So Thompson had sent someone after water for her, and had ordered someone to cut her down.

On May 1, 1865 William Locklear and Hector Oxendine were apprehended while on their way to see a white friend about helping them recover some horses taken by Sherman's men. Their abductors were Charles Townsend and William Humphrey, 2 local whites. William Locklear was allowed to go free. Upon leaving, Locklear heard Humphrey tell Oxendine: "I am going to keep you under guard tonight ... I am going to carry you to Andrew Carlisle's where you did the damage, and then we are going to put you through ... you had no business to go off with the Yankees ... "

The damage referred to by Humphrey was the fact that Oxendine, like many other Indians, had acted as guide to General Sherman's men when they made their devastating march through Robeson County. Oxendine had acted as guide to 3 or 4 armed Yankees. He led the Yankees to Andrew Carlisle's plantation. Carlisle lost a considerable amount of stock to these men. When the Yankees left Robeson County around March 10, 1865, Oxendine had left with them, still serving in the capacity as guide. The white citizens were furious at Oxendine, and as one noted: "We'll kill him if he ever comes back."

Townsend and Humphrey took Hector Oxendine to the house of Elias Carlisle, Andrew's father. Elias Carlisle had this to say concerning the incident when Hector Oxendine's murder was investigated by the Freedmen's Bureau in 1867: "William Humphrey and Charles Townsend, both white citizens of this county of Robeson, N.C. brought Hector Oxendine to my house on or about the 2nd day of May 1865 and left him there until the next day..." As word spread that Hector Oxendine was under arrest at Elias Carlisle's, Humphrey and Townsend were joined by Benjamin Marden, Elisha Harrell, Archie McMillan, William Carlisle and John C. Carlisle.

Jack Carlisle, a Black slave belonging to Elias Carlisle, testified August 13, 1867 when Hector Oxendine's murder was investigated by the Freedmen's Bureau.

He testified "that he was at Elias Carlisle's and William Humphrey came up and asked him to go to Andrew Carlisle's and ask him to come up as he wanted him to bring his gun and help to shoot a Buck, and I understood he meant the Buck to be Hector Oxendine. Andrew Carlisle then came back with me with his gun and I told him what William Humphrey asked me to tell him. And about eleven o'clock in the morning they went off to the woods with H. Oxendine."

"William Carlile, Archie McMillan, Elisha Harrell, Andrew Carlile, John Carlile, William Humphrey, Benjamin Malden & Charles Townsend came to Elias Carlile's house, and took Hector Oxendine off," Jack Carlisle further testified during cross examination. "And took him over to the swamp. And then Archie McMillan came back to Elias Carlile's and told me to take a spade and hoe and go over to the swamp. And on my way over to the swamp I met John Carlile coming after me. And he went with me back to the men. And there was Hector Oxendine killed. And William Carlile, Benjamin Malden, Andrew Carlile and Charles Townsend had each a gun. There were three other guns standing there, but I do not know whose they were ... I was ordered by William Carlile and Elisha Harrell to dig Hector Oxendine's grave, which I did."

The next day Oxendine's kin came to Elias Carlisle's house. The elder Carlisle led them to where Oxendine was buried in the shallow grave. The body was exhumed, taken and given a decent burial.

A judge investigating the incident to see if the whites could be tried by the Military noted: the angry whites held no "civil or military office, nor ... [did] they belong to the United States army, or to the army of the late Confederacy; nor ... [were they] members of a home guard; [and further more, they were not] acting under the orders of any assemblage of organized authority whatever. They were simply an assemblage of excited and exasperated citizens, who had taken the law into their own hands ..." Although it was the judge's conclusion that Hector Oxendine was a victim of "lynch law," no action was taken. The reason stated was that at the time of the incident the area was not under military jurisdiction.

Exactly one week later, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, Virginia. The Civil War was officially ended.



Allen Lowry and his son William were murdered by a mass white vigilante group March 3, 1865 shortly before the Civil War ended. The vigilante group which numbered in excess of 100, evidently had decided to take the law into their own hands. The bodies of both Allen and William Lowry were dug up and reinterred March 6, 1865 by relatives and friends. The tombstone above marks the site where their bodies were reinterred.

The tombstone above, on the left side, reads: "William Lowry, Died March 9, 1865. Aged about 32 years." The right side of the tombstone reads: "Allen Lowry, Died March 9, 1865. Aged about 75 years." Note that the date of their death is erroneous. The two were murdered March 3, 1865.



TOMBSTONE OF MARY LOWRY, Henry Berry Lowry's mother. The tombstone reads:

Mary
Lowry
Died
August 28, 1890
Aged About
88 Yrs.

Chapter 3

Civil War Ends Henry Berry Lowry Marries Rhoda Strong

“Henry Berry Lowery was only 16 at the time of his father's death, but in the next decade he wove a pattern of dastardly crime into the history of Robeson County. By the might of his personality, despite his youth he became the leader of the gang that struck terror to the souls of the inhabitants of Robeson County, the memory of which brings a shudder to the older settlers of the community to this day.”

(“The Story of the Lowry Gang and the Murder of Colonel Francis Marion Wishart” by Lucie Martin, reprinted from April 22, 1934 edition of “Charlotte Observer”)

It was officially announced in Robeson County. May 15. 1865 that all Black-skinned slaves were free. The Civil War was officially ended. The Union Army was victorious and happy; the Confederate Cause lost, the South bitter and dejected. The Black slaves were free. They no longer had to answer to their white masters for their every act. But, conversely, their former masters no longer had to feed, clothe or furnish a shelter over their freed heads. The vast majority of the freed slaves were accustomed to being cared for by their white masters. They had become dependent upon them. Now, suddenly, they found themselves cast out in the midst of a cruel, uncaring, out-of-whack, and totally unfamiliar free world. Many were quite naturally lost and bewildered.

After roaming the countryside, many experiencing the true agony of hunger for the first time, a number of freed slaves returned to their former white masters with their hands held imploringly out. They realized that contrary to what the government proclaimed, a free man needed food to survive in any type of world. Their white masters still controlled the food; therefore many signed work agreements with their former masters agreeing to continue working for them for only room and board. This was legalized slavery in a sense. Hence, in reality, the ex-slaves were free only on paper.

After the Civil War ended in defeat for the Confederacy, most whites in the South became Conservatives. The Conservative believed that instead of making the Black instantly free, he should be forced to prove himself worthy of such a distinction. They felt that menial labor still had to be performed and that the former slaves were the most qualified. The Conservatives wanted the ex-slaves to serve as an apprentice to his former master. As the Black proved himself

deserving, those rights enjoyed by free citizens would be gradually bestowed upon him.

Conversely, Radicals, a faction of the opposing Republican Party, felt that ex-slaves should be made instantly free. They further felt that a portion of the former master's estate should be granted to the former slave to better aid him in coping with his free status. Since Conservatives were in reality Confederates with new names, the two sides bitterly opposed each other.

No doubt, the Black ex-slaves and the brown-skinned Indians thought better days lay ahead. They had but to notice the government's plan of reconstructing the South, however, to realize that the worst was yet to come. Instead of sending in Union soldiers to maintain law and order, the government left powers instilled in local authorities. Those political bigwigs in Robeson County who had dispensed justice before the Civil War, were allowed to continue meting out this one-sided justice. The county continued to be dominated by a handful of ex-Confederate whites. Thomas A. Norment was chairman of the court in Lumberton. His son William S. Norment was county solicitor. John Alfred Rowland, Thomas A. Norment's son-in-law, was court clerk. "Black" Owen Norment, Norment's grandson, was head of the county militia, entrusted with seeing that the wishes and decisions of the court were carried out. Reuben King, quite possibly the richest white in the county during this turbulent period, was high sheriff of Robeson County. His son-in-law, William Ives Brown, was constable. The well-to-do Wishart family also held various positions of power and influence in the county. These prominent whites, whose warped mentality dictated that they were superior to all non-whites, continued to treat the Indians and Blacks in the county as inferior beings, and to look down their noses at them.

Soon after the war ended, the Home Guard was disbanded, and ceased to exist. In order to deal with the problem of protecting the ex-masters' properties from the roaming and hungry freed slaves, the Squires met in Lumberton and decided that a "police guard" was needed. In essence, this was the Home Guard reorganized. The government recognized the Police Guard and furnished them with firearms and ammunition. The Johnson administration entrusted the Police Guard with maintaining law and order in the community. To eliminate friction, President Johnson had all Union military forces moved out as soon as possible. Some of the Police Guard continued to wear their old Confederate uniforms and it was thought that the Union soldiers might disprove of this. Although this lenient approach to the South in regard to reconstruction worked fine for relations between the North and South, relations between non-whites and their white neighbors continued to disintegrate.

Yes, indeed! the future looked dismal for the Blacks and Indians in Robeson County.

The following excerpts from "The Swamp Outlaws" will present the reader with a better understanding of the deplorable condition the Indians of Robeson County found themselves in after the Civil War.

"The Scuffletowners go out to work as ditchers for the neighboring (White) farmers, who pay them the magnanimous wages of \$6 a month.

"As many of them are intemperate (not moderate; excessive; going to extremes) a neighboring trader with a barrel of molasses and a barrel of rum speedily gets the \$6 from the whole party.

"The above picture while true of the majority of the Scuffletowners, is not justly descriptive of all.

"The Oxendines are all well to do, or were before this blood feud (Henry Berry Lowry Uprising) began, and the Lowrys were industrious carpenters, whose handiwork is seen at Lumberton, Shoe Heel (now Maxton) and all round that region.

"Great crimes in Scuffletown were rare before the war (Civil War).

"Petty stealing and pilfering of chickens and an occasional pig were not unknown.

"The whites hated the settlement (Scuffletown) because it was a bad example to the negroes. But most of the people were Baptists or Methodists, and nearly all owned their homesteads."

The Scuffletown Indians were really no better off than they were before the war. Food continued to be a major problem. The wealthy whites of the county, as mentioned previously, continued to control food, hence controlling the county. The Indians had long been cheated out of their more fertile lands and pushed back along the banks of Lumbee River where the soil was marshy and unsuitable for growing food.

Indeed, the average Scuffletown Indian lived in abject poverty. There were a few exceptions to the rule -- such as the Lowrys and Oxendines -- but as a general rule the Indians were dirt-poor. The following description of an average Indian family's homestead gives one a clearer understanding of the existing conditions following the end of the Civil War. This description is taken from "The Lowrie History" by Mary C. Norment.

"If a traveler wishes to visit a Scuffletown shanty he will be compelled to leave the public road and take a foot-path leading through the woods, across branches and swamps, until he reaches a worn fence made of pine rails, inclosing a half cleared patch of land containing three or four acres, in the centre of which generally

stands the Indian cabin, constructed of pine poles about five or six inches in diameter, notched one above the other until it reaches the height of eight feet and then covered with pine boards; the chimney built against one end of the house on the outside of poles and clay as far up as the body of the house goes, and the balance of the chimney with sticks and clay, where it narrows to the funnel or smoke hole; a door is cut on the front side and the chinks stopped with clay; no windows generally; sometimes a cut hole is left on the door with numerous peep holes in the body of the cabin. A little distance from the cabin will be found a well of water, or rather a hole dug in the ground, surrounded with a cypress gum or curb to keep the children from falling in and getting drowned. In the corner of the chimney on the outside will be found a half barrel sawed off and set up on boards one foot above the ground for running off lye, from wood ashes, for the purpose of making soap, the other half of the barrel being used as a washtub. A poor, half-starved fice dog, used for hunting 'possums' and 'wild varmints' will generally be found inside of the inclosure. The two or three acres cleared are ploughed and planted in corn, potatoes and rice, which come up puny, grow puny and mature puny. The woman of the house commonly has a baby at the breast, and from a half dozen to a dozen children playing outside of the enclosure in the woods. The bed is made on the floor (generally a clay floor); two or three stools to sit on; no division in the cabin, one apartment comprising the whole establishment."

When General Sherman made his devastating march through Robeson County, the escaped Yankees from the nearby stockade in Florence, S.C. went with him. As a result, the Lowry Gang disbanded. Henry Berry Lowry, his brothers and other blood relatives, all went home. The Indians were bitter about the inferior treatment they continued to receive from their white neighbors, but willing, nevertheless, to let bygones be bygones. They returned home and attempted to return to a life of quiet and peace. It should be remembered that many had been camping out in the inhospitable woods and swamps for 4 years. They were thankful that the war had ended, and they could finally return home to their families, with their pride intact.

Although many writers contend that Henry Berry Lowry was motivated by vengeance for the murders of his father and brother, nothing could be further from the truth; the 20-year-old Indian youth was madly in love. Now that the war was over, and he no longer had to hide out in the swamps like a hunted animal, the Indian youth was contemplating marriage to his first cousin, Rhoda Strong. Many have reported that she was the most beautiful Indian maiden in all of Scuffletown. Rhoda's father was white and her mother Indian. She has been described as having a "pretty face which is by the way almost white..."

“remarkably pretty, with large dark, mournful eyes, with long lashes and a very well developed figure.”

The date of the wedding was set for December 7, 1865. Henry Berry insisted that the wedding take place at the old Allen Lowry homestead. A number of kinsmen felt that this would be inviting trouble. Resentment and bitterness still smoldered in the bosoms of the whites. Henry Berry's kin felt that holding the wedding at the old Allen Lowry homestead would be like reopening an old wound. The whites would view the wedding at the old homestead as a sign of defiance. Nevertheless, Henry Berry insisted. A white friend, Hector J. Mclean was chosen to perform the ceremony.

The murder of Hector Oxendine should have warned Henry Berry Lowry that the whites of Robeson County were not the forgiving types. Although the Union government, in a sense, forgave the South for rebelling against the Union, and left her pretty much alone to reconstruct herself, Robeson County whites were unwilling to forgive an Indian whose only crime was acting as a guide to Sherman's troops. If Oxendine's sin was unforgiveable, then surely Henry Berry Lowry's was. The whites would not forgive Henry Berry for the murders of James Putnum Barnes and James Brantley Harris. And they were not about to forget. For the time being, however, Henry Berry was unconcerned with the chaotic state of affairs in the county. The wedding went as planned December 7, 1865.

Food was still a scarce commodity for everyone except the well-to-do whites in the county. Nevertheless, there was a wide array of delicious foods at the wedding, more than enough to feed the approximately 200 guests. This was baffling to the whites for there had been few reports of robberies since the Civil War had ended and the Lowry Gang disbanded.

After the ceremony was performed, and everyone filled with the delicious food which was spread out on a 75-foot table, A. J. McNair arrived at the old Allen Lowry place with the Police Guard. Leut. McNair informed Henry Berry that he was under arrest for the war-time murders of James Putnum Barnes and James Brantley Harris. He requested that Henry Berry place his hands behind his back so that he could be handcuffed. Henry Berry refused. McNair ordered one of the Police Guard members to shoot the young Indian for resisting arrest. Henry Berry jumped behind the Squire Hector Mclean, placing his hands behind him. He realized that unarmed he was no match for the armed and trigger-happy whites. Knowing that he would have to incite the crowd in his favor if he was to possibly escape, he appealed to the Indians around him: “Are you going to let them tie me up on this ... my wedding day?” The crowd became restless and excited. About half the Indians dispersed. The rest remained, glaring menacingly at the white intruders.

McNair took Henry Berry and started off en route to Lumberton. Squire Mclean stopped McNair and ordered him to produce a warrant or release the

bridegroom. McLean warned McNair that he was authorized as a justice of the peace to arrest him if he did not release Henry Berry. McNair ignored McLean's warning and continued with his Indian prisoner. About 75 Indians followed close behind. When the crowd of restless Indians had followed McNair for approximately 300 yards, they arrived at a bridge over a canal. It was here McNair and the Police Guard made their final stand. As the first of the Indians tried to pass over the narrow bridge, he was knocked back with the butt end of a rifle. The next Indian received the same treatment.

Squire McLean told the crowd to wait and let him make a personal appeal to McNair. The white squire was allowed to cross the bridge. He argued with McNair for a time. Finally, tired of McLean's threats and arguments, McNair held McLean as hostage and continued on his way to Lumberton. The Indians turned back. Before reaching Lumberton, Mclean was released with a stern warning to behave himself in the future.

When General Sherman had reached Lumberton on his devastating march through the area, he had found that the Lumberton jail was being used to hold escaped Yankees and Indian sympathizers. Sherman released the prisoners and burnt the jail to the ground. For this reason, Henry Berry was held for safe keeping in a vacant room with an armed guard placed over him. He was later taken to the Columbus jail in Whiteville to await trial.

It should be noted that a warrant for his arrest was not drawn up until December 8, 1865. Yet, he was arrested December 7, 1865. This is a clear example of the one-sided justice existing during that chaotic period of time.

When Henry Berry was brought before a preliminary hearing, he refused to cooperate with the court. He refused to answer questions directed at him or to question prosecuting witnesses. After the preliminary hearing, he was returned to his Whiteville jail cell where he was heavily shackled. The jail had a reputation of being escape-proof. It was routine for prisoners to be shackled.

Meanwhile, Henry Berry's new bride was not idle. The lovely Rhoda, along with her brother Boss Strong, who was only 14 at the time, traveled the many miles to Whiteville in a boat. Boss camped on the riverbank where the boat was docked near the town. Rhoda walked the rest of the way into town alone. When she reached Whiteville, the beautiful Indian maiden entered an all-night cafe. Behind the counter was a white woman proprietor in her 40s.

While conversing with the proprietor, Rhoda learned that the woman was short of help because her husband was across the street, locked up in jail for public drunkenness. Rhoda, ever alert, volunteered her help as a waitress. Thinking that a beautiful waitress could not hurt business, the woman proprietor hired her.

The next day at noon, the proprietor gave Rhoda a tray of food to take across the street to the jail for her husband's lunch. The sheriff waved the pretty Indian girl through with the tray of food. She handed the tray through the bars to her employer's husband, quickly scanning the jail cells. She located her new groom in the adjoining cell but made no sign of recognition. She left the tray and turned to go.

Much to her dismay, however, Rhoda realized that the sheriff had other intentions. Overcome with Rhoda's loveliness, the sheriff reached for her. She stalled his passes by promising to return that night at midnight when all would be quiet. The sheriff let her pass, intently watching the beautiful Indian maiden as she crossed the street to the cafe.

When Rhoda returned to the waiting Sheriff that night at midnight, she wore a full-gathered skirt, borrowed from the woman proprietor. She opened the door to the jail and slid quietly in, unnoticed by anyone other than the occupants of the jail.

The sheriff, mad with desire for the voluptuous Rhoda, made a maddened lunge for her. She stopped him by pointing and motioning to the sheriff's cot beside the wall. The sheriff walked unsteadily toward the cot and flung off his vest, his gunbelt and key ring containing the keys to the cells and shackles were next. Not did his eyes leave the face of the Indian girl who smiled seductively. She waited, standing provocatively with hands on hips. The sheriff bent down to take off his boots. At this point, Rhoda reached down and grabbed the hem of her skirt.

She undid a string around the upper part of her thigh. The string held in place an iron pipe. She struck the sheriff a devastating blow over the back of the head with the iron pipe. Retrieving the keys and the sheriff's gun, Rhoda proceeded to unlock her husband's cell door and his shackles. Never a word was spoken throughout the escape. The newly weds disappeared into the stealth of darkness. They reached the boat which Boss had ready and waiting. Silently, the three Indians rowed upstream. Destiny: Scuffletown. This escape sealed a friendship pact between Henry Berry Lowry and the youthful Boss Strong which was to last until Boss' death.

After Henry Berry's infamous Whiteville jailbreak, the Conservative Governor, Jonathan Worth placed a reward on his head for \$300. Over 35 warrants had been issued throughout North and South Carolina to no avail. \$300 was a lot of money during those turbulent times. For this reason, Henry Berry took once again to the swamps.

Most Scuffletown Indians were disillusioned and disappointed because the federal government had reinstated powers in local governments as their answer to Reconstruction of the South. They continued to be treated as inferior beings by their resentful and bitter white neighbors. Because so many Scuffletown Indians

were bitter over the way President Johnson and the North handled Reconstruction, especially after the Indians had been so faithful to the Union Army, Henry Berry found others more than willing to join him once again in his swampy retreat.

The following persons comprised the Lowry Gang following Henry Berry's Whiteville jailbreak: Henry Berry Lowry, leader; his brothers Tom and Steve; Henderson Oxendine, cousin to Hector Oxendine who had just recently been murdered by a vigilante group of whites; Boss Strong, Rhoda's brother who was to become Henry Berry's right-hand-man; George Applewhite, a former slave who was married to Henderson Oxendine's sister; John Dial, son of George Dial who was tortured during questioning March 3, 1865 when the Indian round-up occurred; Shoemaker John, alias John Allmon, a former Black slave who was a shoe cobbler during bondage; William Chavis, a bright-complexioned "half-breed Indian"; and Zachariah T. McLaughlin, a poor white who was raised among the Scuffletown Indians. Andrew Strong, Boss' brother joined the gang in 1870. The following constant members were related either by blood or marriage: Henry Berry Lowry, Steve Lowry, Tom Lowry, Boss Strong, Andrew Strong, Henderson Oxendine, William Chavis and George Applewhite.

Let us take a closer look at these constant members of the Lowry Gang.

Henry Berry Lowry, the leader of the gang was only 20 years old at the time of the Whiteville jailbreak. Mrs. Mary C. Norment, author of "The Lowrie History" described Henry Berry thusly:

"He is of mixed blood, strangely commingled, having coursing his veins the blood of the Tuscarora Indian, and the Cavalier blood of England. He made a handsome personal appearance when dressed up. The color of his skin is of a mixed white and yellow, partaking of an admixture, resembling copper, the Indian color, however, still predominating. Such a skin is affected very little by heat or cold, by sickness or health, or by exposure, or good housing. A scar in the shape of a crescent and of a blackish color is on his face just below his left eye, said to have been made by an iron pot falling on him when a child. The contour of his face is that of a Southron. His countenance is expressive in the highest degree of firmness, decision of character and courage. Generally, he is reticent, a good listener, seldom talkative, manifesting in his demeanor little or no disposition at self importance. When he converses, he talks like an illiterate man, conversant with no books except of nature, and human nature. Considering his long career of lawlessness, his want of education and his race, he is a prodigy. Phrenologically speaking, his forehead is good, high, broad and massive; the color of his eyes is a grayish hazel, and when excited and agitated, would dilate and expand. A smile generally played over his countenance when quiet but when aroused it was a smile of a demon. He wore a dark goatee, his hair was straight and black like an Indian's. He was twenty-six years old, five feet ten inches high, and weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds. Physically he was well knit,

straight in the back, his arms and shoulders fitting on well, a deep broad chest; in short, proportioned throughout without a flaw in his frame. Like a India rubber ball, he was elastic all over. In his dress he was rather careless and negligent. He generally wore calf-skin boots, a woolen frock coat or blouse, breeches or trousers of the same material; mostly, however of Salem or Kentucky Jeans, with a wide brimmed felt hat. Although a tippler, he was never known to be intoxicated, he invariably carried a flask of whiskey with him wheresoever he went. He did this to avoid being poisoned by promiscuous drinking.

“In regard to his arms: a belt around his waist kept in place five six barreled revolvers -- long shooters; from this belt a shoulder strap passes up and supports behind, slinging style, a Henry rifle, which carries the extraordinary number of sixteen cartridges. In addition to these fifty-two charges, he carried a long bladed knife and a double-barreled shot gun, his whole equipment weighing not less than eighty pounds. His main object in thus equipping himself was doubtless to stand a long campaign, or to be ready with almost an arsenal at his command, to encounter a large body of men in pursuit of him. With all his armor on he could run, swim, stand weeks of exposure in the swamps, walk day and night and take sleep by little snatches, which in a few days would tire out white or negro. Being fond of blood he has waged for the past ten years a savage predatory warfare against the county, State, Confederate and United States authority. Without advantages other than nature gave him, without fear, without hope, defying society, he carried out his tactics in a peculiar way, impressing the whole population with his superiority, power and influence as a brigand leader and executive spirit. Occasionally his blood and inclinations will crop out, and two natures of white and Indian will come forward and show themselves to the close observer, and in a way unlooked for. He plays on banjo, together with the Juba beating and dancing of the Indian girls, has on several occasions come near betraying him to his pursuers. His Indian nature may be traced in his character, by his using women as an auxiliary to war and plunder. He himself is the Don Juan of Scuffletown. Women have been employed to betray him, but they either repent or he discovers their purpose. He sleeps on his arms and never seems tired; ever active, ever vigilant, he is never taken by surprise. His cavalier scrupulousness may also be observed in the matter of a promise or treaty. Those most robbed and outraged by this bandit give him credit for complying strictly to his word. Like the rattlesnake, he generally warned before he struck. Two things he has never done -- he has never committed arson, nor offered to insult white females. In these two things may be traced his cavalier blood.”

It is doubtful that a better description of Henry Berry Lowry exists. It should be noted that Mrs. Mary C. Norment lived during Henry Berry's reign over the Scuffletown area. Her husband was a victim of the Lowry Gang.

Steve Lowry was the last of the Lowry Gang to be murdered. When he was killed by a handful of whites, he was 36 years old. He, too, was 5 feet and 10 inches tall. Steve was stockier than Henry Berry, however, weighing 170 pounds. Mrs. Norment says in regard to Steve that he was 'thick set, round shouldered, heavy and of great muscular power; impudent in manner; insolent in speech, showing the high-way robber and exhibiting in his personal appearance more of the Indian brigand than any of the outlaw gang.' It's very evident that Steve Lowry did not make much of an impression upon Mrs. Norment.

Steve Lowry's hair was also straight and black. Unlike Henry Berry's, however, his hair was very thick. He wore a moustache which he kept trimmed short. His eyes were "blackish-hazel." He was the most feared of all the gang, possessing a vile and uncontrollable temper. On at least one occasion, his temper was said to have gotten him involved in a dispute with Henry Berry Lowry.

Tom Lowry's skin was of a darker hue than his other brothers. One source describes him as being "... Indian-Gypsy looking." When Tom was murdered he was 37-years-old. He was well built, having broad and massive shoulders. The outlawed Indian, who one source said looked sneakier than his other brothers, had straight black hair. He was 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighed 180 pounds. His eyes were bluish-gray.

When Boss Strong was murdered March 7, 1872 he was only 20 years old. As stated, he was Henry Berry's brother-in-law, as well as his trusted companion and friend. His features were more white than Indian. He had short, dark and curly hair, having a reddish tinge to it. He wore a mustache but no beard. His eyes were blue. Boss was a lot like Henry Berry; seldom talkative and a good listener. He was considered to be next in line as leader of the Lowry Gang should anything happen to Henry Berry. He was also about 5 feet 10 inches tall, weighing approximately 165 pounds.

Henderson Oxendine was the only Lowry Gang member tried, convicted and executed by the courts. When he was hanged in the Lumberton jail yard in April, 1871 he was 28 years old. He was also thick-set, but presented the appearance of being slim. He had straight black hair and an indifferent face. The manner in which Henderson Oxendine accepted his fate speaks much for his character. Before being hanged, he sang a few hymns, closed the hymn book and handed it to the preacher. He then was hanged without a whimper. Needless to say. Henderson Oxendine possessed great courage; few stare death in the eye without being cowed under.

John Dial was son of George Dial. It should be remembered that George Dial was tortured during questioning when he was arrested by the exasperated and angry white mob on March 3, 1865. This is probably the reason why his son joined the Lowry Gang. A large wart under John Dial's left eye on the side of his nose caused him to look mean and fierce. Although it was John Dial who shot S.E. Ward, a white citizen visiting Sheriff Reuben King when King was murdered by the Lowry Gang, he later turned state's evidence against the rest of the Lowry Gang.

Shoemaker John, as previously mentioned, received his nickname because he was a shoe cobbler when he was a slave. He was "as black as a spade, being rather stocky with a round, full face." He also turned state's evidence against the rest of the gang.

George Applewhite was also a former slave. He was married to the sister of Henderson Oxendine. Applewhite was considered the luckiest member of the Lowry Gang. He was seriously wounded on a number of occasions. The newspapers would report that he was dead. In a short time he would show up with the Lowry Gang at yet another robbing in the Scuffletown area. He was one of the few Lowry Gang members to survive the ordeal and die of old age. It has been reported that after he left Robeson County he went to Goldsboro, where he was recognized and arrested. He was later set free under the Amnesty Act.

Zach McLaughlin was considered "white trash" by his white neighbors because he lived in poverty with, and was raised among the Scuffletown Indians. He traveled with the gang at night and lived with his mother during the day. Sheriff Roderick McMillan locked him up after he was recognized at the site of one of the Gang's robberies. He later escaped and joined the Lowry Gang in earnest. Mrs. Norment described McLaughlin as "... the meanest specimen of the Scotch that could be found in the county."

Another white man named Bryan Gilbert was also involved with the Lowry Gang. He was wounded by a white planter named David Townsend when the Lowry Gang raided his place. He was taken by the Gang to their secret camp, the Devil's Den, to recover. He died from the wounds shortly thereafter, however.

William Chavis was a tall, bright-complexioned Indian. He was "especially good-looking." He was 30 years old, well built and very muscular. He escaped to Georgia as soon as the Lowry Gang was outlawed in 1868.

This small, tri-racial band of desperadoes defied all attempts by local, state and federal authorities to apprehend them. Their leader, Henry Berry Lowry became a legend in his own time. In fact, he was so renowned that the infamous Jesse James from Missouri many times told his victims that he was Henry Berry Lowry and that they were being robbed by the Lowry Gang.

By posting an armed guard to watch for him, Henry Berry managed to spend some time with his wife Rhoda. Shortly after the Whiteville escape, Rhoda found that she was pregnant. Henry Berry built a home for her and their expected child on the south edge of Back Swamp near Asbury Church. In 1867 their first child was born. Henry Berry named the girl Sally Ann.

Also, during this time “Black” Owen Norment (Mrs. Mary C. Norment's husband), so named because of his black hair, beard and eyes, was one of Henry Berry's most persistent and relentless pursuers. After the Civil War ended, Norment was commissioned to serve in the Police Guard. He so distinguished himself by hunting down Henry Berry and his gang, that he was raised in rank to a captain. The Norment family, as previously mentioned, was one of the most powerful and influential families in Robeson. When the Republicans managed to oust the Conservatives from power in the county in 1868, Norment found himself temporarily out of a job. His unemployment was short-lived, however. It was only a short time before the Republicans, too, called on “Black Owen” to comb the dense woods and swamps in search of Henry Berry Lowry and his notorious Lowry Gang. A great deal of animosity existed between the ever-elusive Henry Berry and the ever-persistent Norment.

In August, 1867 the following persons went to Lumberton to see William Birnie, local agent of the Freedmen's Bureau: Zack Locklear, Hector McLean, Sinclair Lowry, George Dial, Henry Johnson, Thomas Carter, Calvin Lowry, Puss Lowry, Sally Lowry, Mary Lowry, Zach McLauchlin, Robert McLean, Archibald McLean, Willoby Locklear and John Sampson. As a result, about 20 prominent white Home Guard members were charged with the murders of old man Allen Lowry and his son William, March 3, 1865. The above-mentioned parties witnessed the warrant which was issued August 22, 1867. It was from the court transcript of the trial prompted by this warrant, that the testimony by Calvin Lowry in chapter two is taken. The warrant reads as follows (the transcript this warrant was taken from was written in long hand without the use of punctuation, therefore it is presented as close to its original form as possible without making it impossible to read and understand):

“The jurors for the State, upon their oath, present that Rhoderick McMillan, Robert McKenzie, Rev. John H. Coble, Rev. Luther McKinnon, Rory McNair, Angus Baker, John P. Smith, John Walker, Edward Wilkerson, Henry Alford, Archibald McRimmon, Murdoc McRae, John C. Souherland, Robert M. Fields, Daniel McQueen, Duncan Monroe, Brown McCallum, McKay Sellers, Angus Leitch, John Patterson, Malcolm McRae, John H. McLean, John Taylor, David J. Gilbert, Archibald Watson, John McLauchlin, Murdoc McLean and Robert McNair, late of the County of Robeson, not having the fear of God before their eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, on the third day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred and sixty five,

with force and arms at and in the county aforesaid, in and upon one Allen Lowry in the peace of God and the state then and there feloniously, wilfully and of their malice aforethought did make an assault. And that the said Rhoderick McMillan, with a musket valued at one dollar, then and there loaded the musket with one dozen leaden bullets. The said Rhoderick McMillan took the gun in both his hands, and then and there held it against and upon the said Allen Lowry. Then and there McMillan feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought, did shoot and discharge the musket. The leaden bullets aforesaid, left the aforesaid gun then and there by force of the gun powder. The bullets entered the said Allen Lowry near the left half of him. The leaden bullets did strike and penetrate and wound, going into the said Allen Lowry then and there upon the left breast of him. The bullets produced one mortal wound of the breadth of four inches and of the depth of six inches of which said mortal wound the said Allen Lowry then and there instantly died.

“And that the said Robert McKenzie, Rev. John H. Coble, Rev. Luther McKinnon, Rory McNair, Angus Baker, John P. Smith, John Walker, Edward Wilkerson, Henry Alford, Archibald McRimmon, Murdoc McRae, John C. Southerland, Robert M. Fields, Daniel McQueen, Duncan Monroe, Brown McCallum, McKay Sellers, Angus Leitch, John Patterson, Malcolm McRae, John H. McLean, John Taylor, David J. Gilbert, Archibald Watson, John McLaughlin, Murdoc McLean, and Robert McNair feloniously, wilfully, and of their malice aforethought then and there were present aiding and abetting, confederating and maintaining the said Rhoderic McMillan to do and commit the felony and murder aforesaid in manner and form aforesaid. And so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said Rhoderic McMillan and Robert McKenzie, Rev. John H. Coble, Rev. Luther McKinnon, Rory McNair, Angus Baker, John P. Smith, John Walker, Edward Wilkerson, Henry Alford, Archibald McRimmon, Murdoc McRae, John C. Southerland, Robert M. Fields, Daniel McQueen, Duncan Monroe, Brown McCallum, McKay Sellers, Angus Leitch, John Patterson, Malcolm McRae, John H. McLean, John Taylor, Daniel J. Gilbert, Archibald Watson, John McLaughlin, Murdoc McLean and Robert McNair then and there in manner and form aforesaid did feloniously, wilfully and of their malice aforethought did kill and murder Allen Lowry against the peace and dignity of the state.”

The warrant was signed by William Kay, court solicitor.

For two years, the newly reconstituted Lowry Gang lived off their wealthy white neighbors. The Gang gained the respect and support of the poor Indians, Blacks

and a handful of whites by sharing their take with the poor. The Lowry Gang did not commit any murders during this time; robbing only enough to sustain them and their poor friends and relatives seemed to be their sole objective. During this two-year period, the Lowry Gang members could be seen attending church or almost any public function. They were always heavily armed, however. They used the public highways openly. The Gang also spent a great deal of time with their families, taking to the swamps when warned via the word-of-mouth grapevine that the Police Guard was in the vicinity.

Following are a number of depredations allegedly committed by the Lowry Gang from the first of 1866 when Henry Berry escaped from the Whiteville jail until some time around March, 1868 at which time the Republicans ousted the Conservatives from power in Robeson.

On February 22, 1867 Mr. David Townsend was robbed. Two guns, clothing, valuable papers and other items of value were taken.

Shortly after Townsend was robbed, Lt. A.J. McNair and the Police Guard once again made an attempt to arrest Henry Berry. The company, led by McNair met up with Henry Berry at the home of Andrew Strong. Henry Berry managed to escape, however, running into the swamps. McNair and his company of trigger-happy whites were unable to overtake him.

Shortly after this, a portion of the Police Guard confronted Henry Berry at his house located near Asbury Church. He was there with his wife and their new-born child, Sally Ann. Members of the Police Guard allegedly were not aware that a reward was on Lowry's head (a \$300 bounty). The Lowry Gang leader barricaded himself in the cabin and shouted out threats at the men for attempting to arrest him without a warrant. While the men were bickering among themselves about their next recourse of action, Henry Berry, Rhoda and their daughter Sally Ann sneaked out through an underground tunnel which led 60 feet into the swamp. No firing occurred during this incident.

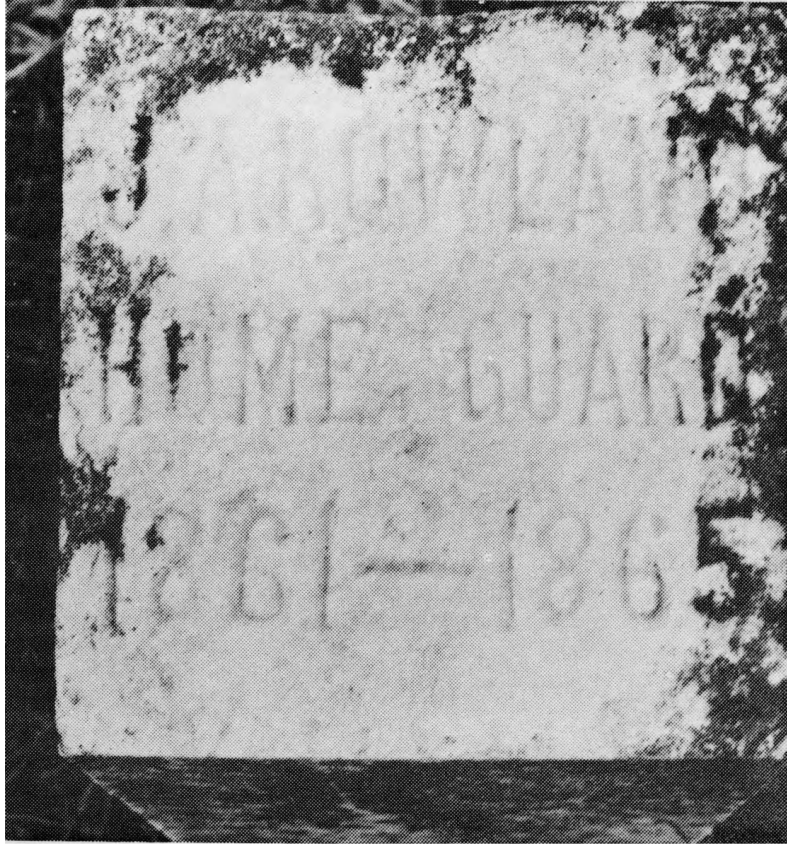
In June, 1867 John McNair's farm was robbed. The Lowry Gang took a bed, pillows, blankets, sheets, combs, brushes and the like. On the night of January 23, 1868 the Gang again robbed McNair. This time they took \$125 and other things of value, including McNair's guns, the keys to his house and a gold watch.

Major J. H. McQuinn was robbed by the Lowry Gang Nov. 1, 1867. It was reported that "the old man was left in a deplorable condition" as a result of the robbery.

The following prosperous white planters also were allegedly robbed by the Lowry Gang during this time: Richard Townsend, Robert McKenzie, Alex McKenzie, Robert Graham, William Graham, A.S. McNair, John Purcell, Duncan McNair and many others.



THOMAS A. NORMENT'S TOMBSTONE. Thomas A. Norment, a Conservative, was chairman of the court In Lumberton, during Presidential Reconstruction following the Civil War.



JOHN ALFRED ROWLAND'S TOMBSTONE. John Alfred Rowland, Thomas A. Norment's son-in-law, was court clerk following the end of the Civil War.

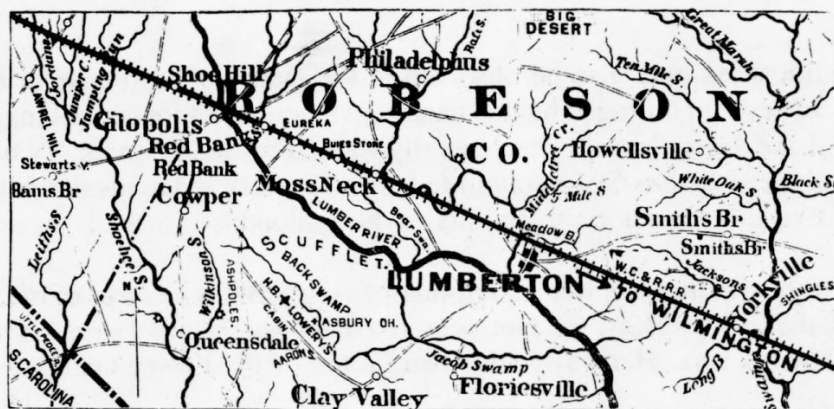


One of only two known (by this writer) original photographs of Henry Berry Lowry.



HENRY BERRY-LOWERY AND HIS GANG IN THE SWAMP.

MARCH 30, 1872.] HARPER'S WEEKLY.



ROBESON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA—THE SCENE OF THE BANDITS' OPERATIONS.



THOMAS LOWERY.



CALVIN OXENDINE.



HENDERSON OXENDINE.



GEORGE APPLEWHITE.

Chapter Four

Republicans Oust Conservatives From Power

In Light of "their actions in past war crimes it would be well to believe that the Gang would not give up peacefully. They seem determined to defend themselves to the last ..., and if they must die, to die game. ...We feel it highly improper for the citizens of the county to gather in mass and slay each and every one. We believe that there are some that would accuse us of disloyalty, and of killing loyal citizens ...For that reason we suggest that your Excellency declare all such as may be guilty of such crimes as outlaws and have them arrested dead or alive."

(Conservative petition presented to governor requesting that the Lowry Gang be outlawed, as appeared in "To Die Game" by W. McKee Evans)

To combat the Conservatives' Ku Klux Klan, the Radical faction of the Republican Party organized their own secret organization, the Union League. This League welcomed the Indians and Blacks as members. The main purpose of the Union League was to spread radical ideas and to unite the Indian and Black voters in the county. The Union League proved to be very instrumental in helping the Republicans oust the Conservatives from power in Robeson County in March of 1868.

When the Republicans took over the reins of power in the county, many changes for the better came about. One change of note was that the Norment family no longer dominated the court system. A board of county commissioners took over charge of the court. Squires were done away with. Instead of being appointed a squire for life, a justice of the peace was elected to office. His main duty, as had been the squire's, was settling neighborhood disputes. Also, Indians began to have a minor role in local government. Patrick Lowry, Henry Berry's brother who was also a pastor, was elected a justice of the peace. Charles E. Barton, another Indian, was also elected a justice of the peace. James Oxendine was elected a county commissioner. The sad feature of the Conservatives' end to their reign of power was that they no longer could use the law to inflict suffering upon the Indians and Blacks. They, therefore, turned more and more to the Ku Klux Klan. From 1868 when the Republicans went into office, until 1871 there were 26 Ku Klux Klan-related murders in North Carolina and 213 floggings. Needless to say, Robeson County received her fair share of these.

After the Republicans took over the reins of power in the county, the Lowry Gang laid low to see if the new government would abide by its word. Unlike the Conservatives who had ruled basically by the use of violence, the Republicans

had preached non-violence during their campaign. For six months after the Conservatives were ousted from power, there were no reports of armed robberies in the county. The Lowry Gang members ventured spending more time with their families. Henry Berry Lowry got a job helping his nephew, Billy Lowry care for his bees.

The Lowry Gang waited. And waited. Months passed slowly by. Still, the Republicans took no action in regard to the status of the Lowry Gang.

One reason the Republicans feared persecuting the Lowry Gang was that Indians and Blacks made up a large portion of the Republican Party. If they acted hastily, and unwisely, they could lose a great many Indian and Black members of the Republican Party. The Republican Party was fairly new in Robeson. The organizational structure was not stable enough to survive such a shattering blow.

In October, 1868 J. W. Schenck, Jr., sheriff of the Whiteville jail that Henry Berry had recently escaped from, wrote a letter to the Republican governor of N.C. The sheriff wanted to know if Gov. Holden intended to honor the \$300 bounty placed on Henry Berry's head by the former Conservative governor. Schenck had a personal score to settle with Henry Berry. As mentioned previously, he was the one Rhoda struck over the head with the iron pipe when she executed Henry Berry's escape from the Whiteville jail.

Gov. Holden didn't have to answer Schenck's letter. Actions would soon force his hand in the matter.

Shoemaker John, a former slave and member of the Lowry Gang, got tired of waiting to see what actions the Republicans would take in regard to the status of the Lowry Gang. Against Henry Berry's orders, the Black organized approximately 30 individuals and went on a robbing spree in North and South Carolina. They robbed the store of J.N. McLaurin in McLaurin, S.C. Afterwards they robbed a number of nearby plantations; A few days later the robbers made their way back to Robeson. The first place they visited was Elizabeth Carlyle's who resided in the northeastern section of the county on the Saddletree Swamp. Here they took all of Mrs. Carlyle's bacon out of her smoke house and robbed the house of its valuables. From here they went to the upper portion of the county and robbed the store of Biggs and Hodgins. This was near Antioch Presbyterian Church. By using augers they broke into the store and took a considerable amount of merchandise. The robbers then broke one of the sacred rules of the Lowry Gang; they robbed Bill Purcell, an ex-slave. After this the robbers raided Flora McFarland's in adjoining Richmond County. Then while in Richmond County, they broke into the gunshop of ex-sheriff William Buchanan. The robbers then winded their way back to Robeson County and robbed James H. McQueen and Alexander McKenzie.

Henry Berry denounced the former slave's actions. He had been hoping for a pardon. Now, Shoemaker John had jeopardized his chances. He let word spread throughout the county that the former slave's life was in jeopardy. Henry Berry was unable to meet up with the former shoe cobbler, however.

Local Conservatives in Robeson were quick to take advantage of Shoemaker John's act of subordination. They presented a petition to the Republican Governor. The petition said, in essence, that local authorities were unable to bring Henry Berry Lowry and his followers to justice for past wartime crimes. The petition blamed local Scuffletonians who came to Lowry's aid whenever Henry Berry was threatened for their lack of success at apprehending the Lowry Gang. In light of "their actions in past war crimes," the petition contended, "it would be well to believe that the Gang would not give up peacefully. They seem determined to defend themselves to the last..." , "and if [they] must die, to die game. Because of their determination to fight to the last we feel it highly improper for the citizens of the county to gather in mass and slay each and every one. We believe that there are some that would accuse us of disloyalty and of killing loyal citizens ... for that reason we suggest that your Excellency declare all such as may be guilty of such crimes as outlaws and have them arrested dead or alive."

Republican Governor Holden granted the petitioners' request. On November 30, 1868 Henry Berry and his followers were outlawed. The bounty on Henry Berry's head was increased from \$300 to \$2,000, dead or alive. The rest of the gang had a bounty of \$1,000 placed on their heads.

The Scuffletown faction of the Republican Party could not support Gov. Holden's seemingly treasonous act. Come election time, a Republican candidate would no longer be assured of Indian and Black support. The Conservatives planned to take advantage of the chaos created by the split within the Republican Party in their bid to regain political control of the county. Fortunately, a handful of local Republicans were able to read between the lines, realizing the harm Holden's actions would have upon the Republican Party as a whole.

In an attempt to settle the matter in a peaceful manner, thereby not bringing any more attention to the problem, a meeting was arranged between Henry Berry Lowry, Dr. Alfred Thomas, local agent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Lumberton and the newly elected Sheriff Benjamin A. Howell. Howell had been elected sheriff at the last election, ending Reuben King's 18-year occupancy of that office.

At the meeting, Rhoda served the guests an appetizing meal. Henry Berry entertained them with his talents on the fiddle. After the entertainment, the three got down to business. The two Republicans assured Henry Berry that it would be in his best interest to give himself up and put his faith in the new Republican court system. They also promised to pay him half of the reward money the state would pay upon his arrest. Henry Berry was still hopeful of a full pardon of all his

war-time crimes. Therefore, he agreed to the whites' proposition. He had two conditions to his surrender, however: he was not to be humiliated or demeaned in any manner, and he was to be locked in the debtor's section of the jail and not shackled. The two Republicans readily agreed to Henry Berry's conditions.

The three men arrived in Lumberton and Henry Berry was locked in the new debtor's section of the jail, overlooking the Lumbee River. When the white citizens of Lumberton learned that Henry Berry was receiving special treatment while a white charged with horse theft was shackled in jail, they became indignant. Rumors began circulating; there was talk of taking him bodily from his cell and drowning him in Lumbee River. The whites' indignation caused the special favors to be discontinued. The sordid rumors became uglier and uglier. Local whites realized that they now had the infamous Henry Berry Lowry behind bars, where they had been attempting to put him for years. As the whites' courage grew, the sordid rumors became even uglier. Eventually, the rumors reached Henry Berry's ears.

On December 12, 1868 when Eb Jones, a shoemaker who worked part time as jailer, brought Henry Berry his evening meal, he was confronted with a gun and a knife. "I have not been treated as promised when I agreed to come here," Henry Berry stated emphatically. "I'm tired of this; open that door and stand aside. If you leave this place for fifteen minutes you will be shot." The Indian youth left the jail, traveling down along the river to avoid town. He stopped at a house and ate some crackers, crossed the bridge and returned to Scuffletown. He vowed that he never again would be placed behind bars. And he never was. How he came by the gun and knife remains a mystery to this day. The most popular version gives his wife Rhoda credit for smuggling the gun and knife into the jail on the inside of a cake she baked for him.

Former sheriff Reuben King had been charged by the Radicals of being "arbitrary and oppressive," especially when dealing with Indian debtors. Many times the Indians' legal rights were ignored. If a hapless Indian got the least bit behind on his taxes. King was quick to evict the Indian and place his land and home up for public auction. It was evident by his oppressive, illegal use of power against them that he detested his Indian neighbors.

At one time, a group of Robeson County Radicals attempted to have King removed from office. An Indian prisoner, Noel Locklear, had served the time handed down by the courts. King refused to set him free, however. Their attempt to have him removed from office proved to be to no avail. The newly-elected Republican sheriff, Benjamin Howell, represented change, however.

It should be noted that although Howell beat King at the polls (thanks to the Indian and Black vote), the ex-sheriff refused to step down gracefully in defeat. Rumors began to circulate that the election was fraudulent. Many Conservatives continued to look to King when it came to a question of law enforcement.

Although Howell's plan to rid the county of Henry Berry Lowry and his gang failed, the new sheriff had proved the sincerity of his pledge to rule the county in a peaceful and non-violent manner.

Former sheriff King realized that if he was to ever win back his office, which he had held for 18 years, he would have to perform a minor miracle. The wealthy white planter knew that if he could apprehend the notorious Henry Berry Lowry and the Lowry Gang, his chances of winning his office back would be enhanced greatly. The ex-sheriff made it a point to spread the word throughout the county that he was going to capture Henry Berry Lowry, dead or alive, and collect the huge reward recently placed upon his head.

On the night of January 23, 1869 Henry Berry, Stephen, Thomas, Boss Strong, George Applewhite, Henderson Oxendine and John Dial went to the home of Reuben King which was located about 2 miles out of Lumberton. The purpose of the visit could very well have been simply to rob the wealthy planter. Mr. S.H. Ward, a white neighbor was visiting at the time. The two white friends were sitting at a table near the fireplace. Henry Berry approached with gun drawn, demanding that King hand over his money. King sprang for Henry Berry, grabbing hold of the barrel of the gun. The two men began grappling for the gun which accidentally discharged into the floor. At that moment George Applewhite, who was lurking in the shadows near the door, shot King in the right shoulder, the bullet penetrating the ex-sheriff's lung. At this time, Ward made a sudden involuntary movement. John Dial shot him. Clothes, bed clothing, \$125 in currency and \$25 in gold, were taken from the home. The Lowry Gang returned to their secret camp, the Devil's Den.

Doctors were summonsed. Mr. Ward's wounds proved to be superficial. King's wound, however, proved to be fatal. The wealthiest white planter in Robeson County lingered for seven weeks before finally succumbing to the fatal wound inflicted by Applewhite.

The white leaders of the county intensified their efforts to apprehend the Lowry Gang after the murder of King. Capt. "Black Owen" Norment, head of the county militia, received orders to take a portion of the militia and arrest Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang for the murder of King. Henry Berry's many friends and sympathizers kept him informed of the Norment Company's whereabouts, however. For this reason, Capt. Norment was unsuccessful.

In May, 1869 David Kellar was robbed, allegedly by the Lowry Gang, of \$350 and a great deal of wearing apparel.

Henry Bullock, Sr. was also robbed in the month of May, 1869. \$30 and some brandy were taken from the elderly white.

After the McKellar robbery, the Lowry Gang was accused of going to the home of Mr. M. K. Griffin. The Gang reportedly rushed into the yard, armed with shot guns. They took Mr. Griffin prisoner and ordered him to divulge the whereabouts of his money. Griffin denied having any money hidden on his premises. After ransacking the house, to no avail, the three Lowry Gang members allegedly took some clothing and Griffin's gun and left.

George Williams, another white planter, was also robbed in the year 1869. The Lowry Gang broke the front door down and entered the dwelling. Williams' family fled through the back door. Henry Berry allegedly fired at one of Williams' sons. It appears that Henry Berry and the young Williams had some type of personal feud going between them.

About this time a prosperous white planter named William C. McNeill was robbed. McNeill owned a saw mill and a mercantile store connected to the Moss Neck Depot. He was a carpet bagger who took advantage of the desperate plight of the Scuffletown Indians and Blacks. He would readily give the minorities credit at his store. The destitute Indian or Black would then be called upon to work in his saw mill until the debt at the store was paid in full. No doubt, many remained in hock to the prosperous white most of their natural life for the average weekly wage paid to an Indian or Black during this chaotic period was \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week.

McNeill detested Henry Berry. One night in 1862 McNeill came upon robbers trying to make entrance into his barn. Firing ensued. McNeill's daughter and wife were standing on the porch throughout the exchange of gunfire. Both received minor wounds. Although Henry Berry assured McNeill that he was not involved in the robbery and the shooting of his wife and daughter, the prosperous white planter continued to hold a grudge.

Henry Berry and Capt. "Black Owen" Norment were arch enemies. Norment was relentless and ruthless. Henry Berry was shrewd and ever-elusive. His many friends and sympathizers kept him informed of Norment's whereabouts. This enabled him to stay a step ahead of the persistent head of the county militia.

No doubt, Norment's job was aggravating and frustrating. On one occasion he came face to face with Henry Berry at Hope Well Church. Henry Berry was armed. Norment was not. Harsh words were exchanged between the two foes. Henry Berry calmly bid the exasperated captain good day and left. This incident so humiliated Norment that he beefed up his campaign to rid the county of the cunning Lowry once and for all. Indeed, many have contended that Henry Berry possessed a knack for humiliating and embarrassing his many pursuers and enemies.

By September, 1869 Capt. Norment and other like companies scouring the Scuffletown area had managed to capture almost the entire Lowry Gang. There

were 6 Indians and 2 Blacks arrested. The Indians were Steve and Thomas Lowry, Henderson and Calvin Oxendine, John Dial, and Andrew Strong. The Blacks were George Applewhite and Shoemaker John. Only Henry Berry Lowry, his right-hand-man Boss Strong, and Zack McLaughlin remained at large.

At long last, the whites of the county could breathe a sigh of relief. In the past few years, approximately 18 murders which occurred during this period were charged to the Lowry Gang, whether any evidence existed to substantiate the allegation or not.

Although the bulk of the Lowry Gang was behind bars, Henry Berry remained elusive as ever. The county leaders arrived at a plan they felt could not fail to capture Henry Berry.

Henry Berry's success at eluding the Police Guard was due, in large part, to his many friends and sympathizers who kept him informed of the Police Guard's whereabouts. In order to capture the cunning leader of the Lowry Gang, one would have to win the confidence of the Scuffletown Indians completely.

The county leaders met with the sheriff of New Hanover County, Sheriff Major A.J. Schenck. Schenck, in turn, recommended to them a Nova Scotian ex-Boston police officer, John Saunders, a big robust man, perfectly suited to go undercover. Schenck's plan was for Saunders to go undercover, winning the confidence of Henry Berry's many friends and sympathizers, and eventually infiltrating the ranks of the Lowry Gang. After winning their confidence completely, Saunders would volunteer to drive the Lowry Gang members and their families to Mexico. Sheriff Schenck and his adherents would intercept the Lowry Gang in Georgia, bagging the whole Gang. The reward money would be divided among the county leaders, Saunders and Schenck.

The county leaders agreed to Schenck's plan. The scheme was so well planned, that Saunders was ordered not to correspond with anyone except Schenck. He was to keep Schenck posted via mail concerning the success of the plan. Schenck would, in turn, get in touch with the county leaders and keep them informed of the success of the plot.

In November, 1869 Saunders settled in the Scuffletown area. To win the Indians' confidence, he began a school to teach the Indian children how to read and write. Of course, a school teacher for Black or Indian children in the South was frowned upon by the uninformed Conservatives. To keep in their good graces, Saunders spread the word that he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan while a police officer in Boston. He pretended interest in joining the Robeson County Ku Klux Klan.

Saunders remained in Scuffletown for approximately 1 year. To the uninformed, he seemed to be a concerned white school teacher. Therefore, the Henry Berry

Lowry saga continued all about him. He soon became an accepted part of the Scuffletown scene. The plot was going so well that many Indian families accepted him into their homes to spend the night. While sitting around the fireplace at night on these occasions, drinking with the man of the house, Saunders learned a great deal of helpful information concerning the Lowry Gang.

CHAPTER FIVE

Saunders Infiltrates Gang's Ranks Owen C. Norment Murdered Escape from "Escape proof" Wilmington Jail

"I spent a day and a night among them, saw several of the gang and learned that they are in the swamp. I lecture to them tomorrow night. I have succeeded in getting the goodwill of all the click that I have met. It will be some days, and, perhaps a couple of weeks before I can secure them. I am in their midst and the least hasty step will capsize all and cost me my life. ...I had a large attendance at my address last night in the black's meeting house and am bound to succeed. Yours respectfully and faithfully, J.C. Saunders."

("To Die Game" by W. McKee Evans)

Just 8 days before the trial of the 8 Lowry Gang members, Mrs. Mary C. Norment experienced an ordeal which she describes in explicit detail in her book, "The Lowrie History":

"On the night of the 19th of March, A.D. 1870, a quarter to 9 o'clock, Mr. Norment ("Black Owen") was shot in his yard, only a few feet from the door. The party who committed this deed had stationed themselves at each corner of the house, and had entered the yard by taking down the palings of the enclosure, just large enough for one man to crawl through at a time. I suppose the family would have heard the noise of the drawing out of the palings had it not been for the noise of the children frolicking with their father at the time ... After the children were quietly slumbering, he arose and took a seat by the fire, conversing for a short time, when he remarked to his wife, in a low tone, that he heard a noise. She replied that she had dropped a hair-pin on the hearth, and supposed that was the noise he heard. He said no, it was not that, but expressed no uneasiness. In a short time he opened the door and stepped out, leaving it open. His wife was looking out at the door and saw the flash of the gun pass. Simultaneously he groaned, and she sprang to the door screaming; she has no recollection of hearing the report of the gun. When she saw the flash of the gun, she comprehended in an instant the situation of her husband, but thought that he had been shot down in the yard, and her intention was to get to him; but he had not fallen. After going into the yard he thought he heard a footstep, and turned to go into the house, when they fired; he leaped to the door, where he was met by his wife just in the act of falling, when she caught and pulled him into the house. He whispered to her to close and fasten the door, and hand him his rifle, as they might attempt to enter and complete their bloody work. She did as he desired, and kneeling by him, supported him, in order that he might have both hands in the use of his gun, and in case they entered, he might at least kill one. She

continued screaming until her father (J.D. Bridgers), with several members of the family, got there. On getting to the door and finding it fastened, they called to her to open it. Knowing her support was necessary to the comfort of her husband, she replied she could not; whereupon, they burst it open and rushed in, finding them in the situation described. They at once inquired of Mr. Norment how he done it, thinking he accidentally wounded himself. He soon explained. Mr. J.D. Bridgers and his son, John Bridgers, started in pursuit of the perpetrators; they had only gone a short distance when Mr. Norment requested some one present to go and tell them to return, as they were risking their lives without a probability of coming up with them. They returned, and after placing Mr. N. in a more comfortable position and binding up his wound, one of his brothers-in-law (J.T. Bridgers) started for Dr. John Dick, who lived about four miles distant, at the same time dispatching a negro boy for Dr. R. M. Norment, a brother of Mr. Norment, who was also a physician, living in Lumberton, a distance of fourteen miles. When they were momentarily expecting the arrival of Dr. Dick, they were again startled by the loud report of a gun in less than a mile on the road which the doctor would come. The family were fearful that they had fired on the doctor to prevent his coming to the sufferer's relief. After a lapse of about an hour and a half, the doctor came, accompanied by J.F. and T.C. Bridgers, reporting that three-fourths of a mile above the house a man stepped from behind a tree and shot the mule; that they jumped out, in their haste and excitement leaving the medicine in the buggy. As they crossed the road to the opposite side from where the man was standing who did the shooting, they passed in arm's length of two others. A negro, who was at the house of Mr. Norment when the doctor came, volunteered to go for the medicine if Mr. Bridgers would lend him a gun. The gun was furnished, and he, with three others, started after the medicine. A short distance from the house of Mr. Norment, one of the negroes stated that he saw a woman, or man dressed in women's clothes, run from the road into the bushes. The supposition was that it was either the wife or mother of some one of the number who did the shooting at Mr. Norment's. The negroes returned just before daylight with the medicines, reporting the mule dead, and the parties near the place, as they had distinctly heard voices close by. They no doubt expected John Bridgers to go for the medicine, and in case that he did they would murder him also, as they openly declared that it was their intention to shoot both Mr. Norment and John Bridgers on that night. They had both been very active in attempting the capture of the murderers of ex-Sheriff King ... Drs. R.F. Lewis and R.M. Norment reached Mr. Norment's about 4 o'clock in the morning. They, with the assistance of Drs. Dick and Barnes, proceeded to examine the wound, and pronounced amputation necessary, as the bones of the right leg were completely shattered. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon the operation was completed, and Mr. N. was found to be in almost a dying condition from which he revived for a few hours. From the shock, loss of blood, and the use of chloroform, all combined, reaction never took place, and he expired a quarter to 7 o'clock the morning of the 21st, living about thirty-six hours after he was wounded.

"This diabolical deed spread gloom and terror throughout the community. and may well be said to have been the beginning of the war in Robeson County with the Lowrie Banditti. For weeks and months the citizens of this county slept with their guns by their sides; the young men, armed and equipped, went forth in search of the vile desperadoes; with steady tramp and hushed voices they traversed the country for miles, but with little or no success.

"I will here state the true causes which led to the shooting of Mr. Norment. After the surrender he was commissioned captain of the (county) militia. The robber clan had then been operating in the county about two years, robbing and plundering at their pleasure --unmolested. After the murder of Sheriff King, Mr. Norment received orders to take out a portion of the militia and endeavor to capture his murderers, which he did, but was unsuccessful. He also had orders to arrest Zack McLaughlin on the charge of stealing. On taking him to trial, sufficient evidence not being elicited against him, he was released. Although he knew Mr. Norment acted under orders, it did not tend to quell the revengeful ire of his nature, and he determined to kill him. Sometime prior to this Andrew Strong had been arrested by Mr. N. for robbing the gin-house of Mr. John Purcell; he was also released on the same grounds. These two were the principal actors in this deed of blood, urged on by others of their friends."

This concludes Mrs. Mary C. Norment's account of the murder of "Black Owen" Norment. It should be noted that no one actually saw the murderer(s). Capt. Norment was known to have arrested many Indians on trumped up charges. In the last paragraph Mrs. Norment made mention of the fact that both McLaughlin and Andrew Strong were arrested by Norment only to be freed by the courts for lack of evidence. No doubt, such actions created many enemies for the head of the county militia. One source states that Norment only agreed to take over charge of the county militia in an attempt to regain lost influence within the Republican Party. In an attempt to make a good showing to the Republican leaders, he many times overlooked the legal rights of his victims. It is safe to assume that one of these many victims was his murderer.

After the murder of Capt. Norment, the authorities had the trial of "The 8" transferred to Whiteville, in Columbus County. Stephen Lowry and George Applewhite were the first to stand trial.

When the case came to trial on April 1, 1870 the prosecution encountered difficulties. The prosecution's case relied almost entirely upon the testimony extracted, by whatever means, from John Dial. Much to the prosecutor's dismay, Dial recanted his testimony, claiming that it had been extracted from him by the use of force and bribery. For this reason, the prosecutor had to find someone else to turn state's evidence. Shoemaker John, who was being held in the Lumberton jail, also turned state's evidence. The prosecutor in Whiteville would have to rely on Shoemaker John's testimony. One fact the prosecutor overlooked was that Henry Berry Lowry was well aware of this fact, also.

On April 2, 1870 Rhoda Strong was allowed to visit the three outlawed Lowry Gang members in the Lumberton jail; Rhoda could easily pass for white, therefore the sheriff in Lumberton failed to recognize her. She had concealed upon her person an auger. Shortly after she left, the three outlawed Lowry Gang members escaped through a hole cut in the jail wall by use of the auger. Shoemaker John was too well aware that Henry Berry had avowed to kill him for killing his chances at a pardon in 1868; Henry Berry had already warned as was his custom. The former slave disappeared from the area after the escape.

Despite the recantation by John Dial, Steve Lowry and George Applewhite were found guilty. The two were incarcerated in the escape-proof Wilmington jail to await their execution date. Calvin Oxendine, Henderson's brother, was also locked up in Wilmington awaiting trial.

On April 21, 1870 Henry Berry, Boss Strong and Andrew Strong raided the home of John Purnell. They arrived at Purnell's about sundown. The Lowry Gang took Purnell's gun and ordered his wife to prepare supper for them. After supper, the outlawed gang ransacked the house and took everything of value they could carry. Afterwards they robbed the smokehouse of approximately 1500 pounds of meat.

On the third Sunday in May, 1870 the Lowry Gang allegedly went to the home of Zach Fulmore. The family was at Church and a Black man was left in charge of the house. The former slave had fallen asleep and was awakened by four disguised intruders. Several articles of value were taken and the Gang left.

Realizing that thus far no ordinary jail cell had succeeded in holding the Lowry Gang, the sheriff took special precautions to insure against escape. His notorious prisoners were incarcerated in a special cell within the main cell block. In this way, if they managed to escape from the special cell they would still have the solid brick walls of the jail to contend with. An armed guard was maintained around the clock.

Sunday, June 12, Sylvester Capps, a Black, was on guard duty. The night seemed as insignificant to him as had all preceding nights of guard duty. At approximately 2 in the morning, he checked the cell doors. Finding them secure, he went upstairs to the kitchen and talked for a while with another guard. The two guards stepped out onto the prison yard and continued their conversation. In time, Capps returned to his post upstairs. Checking the cell door, he realized that all but one of the prisoners were gone. Capps sounded the alarm. It was too late, however; the prisoners had simply vanished. The sheriff had the Black arrested for aiding the prisoners in their escape. He was wrong in his charges, however.

Willie Harper, a white locked up in the debtor's section of the jail, had free access to the entire jail. A short time before the escape, Harper witnessed a pretty woman come to the door of the jail and ask the guard about a "Richardson."

Practically everyone in the jail had their eyes glued to the beautiful lady who all evidence suggests was Rhoda. While everyone had their eyes and attention glued to the beautiful Rhoda, Harper saw Steve Lowry haul a hatchet, a chisel and a file through the jail window by using a string.

After witnessing this ruse, Harper became suspicious and kept an eye on the Lowry Gang members. Having the free run of the place, he investigated and, upstairs, discovered an empty cell. The outer wall was the only barrier between the prisoners and freedom. George Applewhite was in the cell using the chisel to scratch the mortar from between the bricks. In his investigation, Harper also noticed Steve Lowry fashioning something from a spoon. He was surprised to see Steve unlock the cell door with his home-made key. The door was re-locked, however, by Steve, still using the home-made key.

Unwisely, the white warned the Lowry Gang that they were going to get into trouble. Steve Lowry informed Harper that he too would get into trouble if he told on them. Being well aware of the Lowry Gang's reputation, Harper decided it in his best interest to remain silent. Monday morning, at 2 in the morning (June 13) the Lowry Gang saw their special guard go upstairs. They acted quickly. Using the key fashioned from the spoon, Steve unlocked their cell door. They went upstairs and entered the cell, crawling through the hole chiseled through the wall of the empty cell. They slid the thirty feet to the ground using a rope fashioned from their blankets and sheets.

Steve Lowry, George Applewhite and Henderson Oxendine escaped through the hole they had so meticulously chiseled through the solid bricked walls of the Wilmington jail. Calvin Oxendine maintained that he was innocent. He feared that if he escaped with the other Lowry Gang members he would be forced to join them in the swamps.

In 1871, a New York Herald reporter visited Calvin Oxendine in the Wilmington jail. His article follows:

"I visited Calvin Oxendine in the Wilmington jail, whence nearly the whole band escaped, he refusing or being afraid to go.

"The Wilmington jail is an oblong brick structure, to the front of which is affixed the jailor's residence of a plaster imitation of sandstone crowned with battlements.

"The jail is small in size, as big as a country meeting house, and the rear part and body of it descends below the street level into a sunken lot, which is enclosed by a brick wall capped with nails and broken glass.

“From the upper tier of jail windows to the ground, is about thirty feet, and the walls is twelve feet high. A fierce dog goes at large in the jail yard.

“Our worthies occupied one of the rear corner cells in the upper tier of this jail for six months, and they took out the bricks at the side of the edifice, making a small hole, still in outlines distinctly visible though re-enclosed, and let themselves down with their blankets.

“The dog made no alarm, if, as is doubtful, he was at liberty that night, and the neighboring vacant lots gave easy means of escape to our bandit desperadoes.

“The jail is, like most country jails in the South. a piece of dilapidation without, and of bad construction within, and other holes in the rear attest how other prisoners made their riddance.

“One of these holes, at the present writing, has not been bricked up, although some time has elapsed since the inmates cut it.

“I visited the jail with the courteous City Marshal of Wilmington, W.P. Canaday, first entering a livery stable adjacent, through the open chinks of which tools were, probably, handed to the prisoners within, the level being nearly the same and the walls only twenty feet apart.

“The jail in the interior was of an inhuman architecture, the cells being enclosed by a corridor, which debarred them from light and gave only ventilation by shafts above.

“The grated doors admitted very little light through their narrow chinks, and murderer or mere peace-breaker shared a common fate in them, lying almost in darkness.

“ A prison without security for the evil ought to afford some compensation for the merely erring, suspected or unfortunate.

“This jail, while clean enough, is a relic of the Middle Ages.

“If you take from a man liberty give him at least light! One of the iron doors was laboriously unlocked by the negro jailer, and shaking himself from the long vision of darkness, Calvin Oxendine, an indicted murderer of Sheriff King, walked out into the corridor.

“Here was a situation for John Calvin, the Richelieu of the Huguenots! That name, crossing from France to Scotland and

passing into the family nomenclature of Gael and Lowlander, had made the passage of the ocean with the immigrants into Carolina, and these mixed mulattoes and Indians had inherited it from their Scotch neighbors and natural fathers, until now I saw before me the reformer and the bandit, the Genevese and the Scuffletonian in Calvin Oxendine.

"He came out from his cell in a greasy shirt and a pair of woolen trousers belted at the waist, and with his searching, round, indescribable eye, looked me through and through.

"It was a black eye, which got its education from a country place where they make an inventory of strangers in the glimpse afforded by a flash of lightning and rob them before the next flash.

"The speculation in that pair of eyes that he did glare withal mocked knowledge. It was the gypsy's encyclopedia of a chicken coop, and I was the chicken in view.

"From my side of the case it was the worst pair of agates I ever saw -- furtive, plaintive, touching, repelling. God save me from these mixed races, that we cannot understand, which civilize themselves on no one line projection, and give no key to their tortuous character, and are to themselves a heathen mystery!

"I came down the road yesterday, Oxendine, from your part of the world.'

"The big eyes repeated the performance.

"From Robeson County?'

"Yes.'

"Well, did you see that party that went up on Monday-what about them?'

"This was a sort of lethargic earnestness, like a sleepy nature slowly rolling out of bed.

"You mean Pop Oxendine?'

"Yes; my brother.'

"His trial won't come off for several days. But tell me, Oxendine, how came Henry Berry Lowry to get all you boys in his hands? Has he so much greater power than you, although younger?'

“The fellow rolled his orbs at me again, perfectly submissive, but all searching-ignorance and cunning and prowling and wonder reaching out to drink me in and fathom me -- and yet, withal, a sort of roadside equality.

“His rather over-fed face; his cracked, slipshod shoes; his drooping breeches, were mean enough; but there was the gypsy inquiry nearly nonchalant, in his look. Sensual his face certainly was but a deep fallow of power lay in it, generations of the bumper worthy of education from the beginning.

“What crimes against human nature have been committed by Southern prejudice against everything with a drop of the negro in it!

“This rascal's eye looked like genius more than anything I had seen below Richmond.

“Indeed,' he said, after finishing up the study, coolly. 'I can't tell you; I don't know anything about it.'

“Respectful and polite he was all the time, but in his situation, the answer was diplomatic, and the next remark showed that it was not made without logical reference to himself.

“Sheriff, when is my trial coming off. Am I to lie in this dark place two moe (sic) years?’

“I would insist upon my trial,' said the Sheriff.

“I will. I can't stand it.'

“Then after a minute, giving me, another roll of his quiet eyes, he said.

“Can you give me a piece of tobacco sir?’

“ 'No; but I can give you the money to get it.'

“He took it, looked at it, and, pronouncing my name plainly, with thanks although the name had been mentioned only once, walked voluntarily back to his cell.

“These mulattoes of the families of Lowery, Oxendine and Strong have been locked away in the fastness of a hard Scotch population and their development cramped.”

The three desperadoes (Steve Lowry, George Applewhite and Henderson Oxendine) had a sixty mile journey before them before reaching the safety of the swamps interspersed throughout the Scuffletown area. They followed the course of the Cape Fear River until the city of Wilmington was well behind them. They then traveled the remainder of the journey through the woods not wishing to come into contact with any humans whatsoever. It took them approximately one month to reach Scuffletown.

In Henderson Oxendine's alleged confession before he was hanged in Lumberton, he remarked "... Stephen got with Henry Berry before I did. I first saw Henry Berry's wife a little ways from the gate, and she told me that Henry Berry and Stephen were in the house, and I went in. I have not slept in a house since I left Wilmington jail, except once or twice in Henry Berry's, and a few times in George Applewhite's."

The whole Lowry Gang was now free once again. After remaining in jail for about 2 years, Calvin Oxendine's trial was moved to Southport, in Brunswick County. At the trial Calvin proved by a white man from Richmond County that he was at work with him at the time of King's murder. He was found not guilty. The sad part of this gross miscarriage of justice was that he had already spent two years of his life incarcerated in jail for a crime he did not commit.

Undercover agent John C. Saunders was so adept at his trade that soon he became trusted by even the Lowry Gang members; including Henry Berry who seldom if ever trusted whites. Saunders wrote Sheriff Schenck a letter June 3, 1870 informing him that things were progressing nicely.

"I spent a day and a night among them, saw several of the gang and learned that they are in the Swamp. I lecture to them tomorrow night. I have succeeded in getting the good will of all the click that I have met. It will be some days and, perhaps a couple of weeks before I can secure them. I am in their midst and the least hasty step will capsize all and cost me my life. You, sir, have, I fear, no conception of the number of people implicated. There is a black policeman here, who I am making a catspaw of. He has been brought up with them. When we are ready we can indict him. When he returns I'll use him on your canvass if you need him. I shall get the fellows before election ... I had a large attendance at my address last night in the black's meeting house and am bound to succeed. Yours respectfully and faithfully, J.C. Saunders."

As mentioned earlier, the detailed and intricate scheme to win the Lowry Gang's confidence was conceived by Sheriff Schenck, a confirmed carpetbagger. As the above letter implies, Schenck could have had reasons other than greed for the plot. Election time was nearing. No doubt, Schenck realized that if his plan

succeeded, and the Lowry Gang agreed to Saunders' offer to drive them to Mexico, his plan to intercept them in Georgia would be fool-proof. It would appear to all concerned that the good sheriff had captured the whole Lowry Gang single-handedly. There were very few in Robeson County, or elsewhere, who knew that Saunders was an undercover agent. And even if Saunders lived through the ordeal without receiving a stray bullet, he would get little credit for the success of the plan, although he was taking all the risks.

In July, 1870 Saunders once again wrote Schenck. I am "more confident than before of my success, but ... it requires the greatest caution, as all here are connected. I could have gotten James Locklear and Stephen Lowry both since I have been here, but I want the whole gang, if possible, and expect to get them. Applewhite comes to his house occasionally. He is living in South Carolina, about twenty-five miles from here. In order to get my points I am living among them and began a school yesterday. I take a bottle of whiskey and go to certain houses, from whom in my way, I can learn something."

Saunders was gaining confidence with each day. It seemed that the Lowry Gang was doomed. It would not be much longer before Saunders offered to drive the Lowry Gang and families to Mexico.

In July, 1870 David Townsend's was raided, allegedly by the Lowry Gang. Like all local white planters, Townsend was expecting the Lowry Gang every night so he slept with his guns at his side. He heard a disturbance outside and slipped out. He found men trying to make entrance into his smokehouse by cutting out the logs. He quietly re-entered his house, prepared himself and began firing upon the robbers who, at once, began returning the fire. Townsend passed from room to room, in both the upper and lower stories of his dwelling, keeping a continuous barrage of gunfire upon the robbers. During the exchange of gunfire, Bryan Gilbert, a white who was wanted for murder in Fayetteville, was wounded. After the Lowry Gang left Townsend's, Gilbert was taken to the Gang's secret camp, the Devil's Den. He died shortly thereafter.

While most of the Gang was behind bars, some Black loggers who were working with Andrew Strong were involved in a robbery. The loggers were warned that the sheriff was on his way. They escaped down the Lumbee River. Andrew refused to leave, however, maintaining that he was innocent and had nothing to hide.

When the sheriff arrived, he told Andrew that he was under arrest. When Andrew asked to see the warrant, the officer drew his revolver. Strong drew his gun also and badly aimed shots were exchanged between the two. The sheriff fled. Although Strong remained free, he appeared at the next term of Superior Court in Lumberton expecting to be charged with theft. Much to his dismay, however, he was charged with the murder of ex-sheriff Reuben King. The district attorney assured him that if he would testify against Henry Berry and Stephen Lowry he

would be allowed to go free, plus he would receive a great deal of the reward money. When he refused he was jailed under \$1500 bond. He remained in jail until his bond was reduced to \$200. When the \$200 needed to free him was finally raised, Andrew Strong felt compelled to join his blood relatives in the swamps.

August 4, 1870 practically everyone was out voting; it was election day in Robeson. The Conservatives had led an active campaign. It seemed that their chances of winning back control of the county were good. Practically everyone -- Indian, Black and white -- were disappointed with the Republicans.

Mr. E. H. Paul resided in the Alfordsville Township where he owned a store and a turpentine distillery. While he was away from home voting, the Lowry Gang allegedly raided his place. Henry Berry ordered Paul's sister to hand him the key to the store. She told him she had thrown it away when she saw them approaching. Henry Berry ordered his men to arrest her and her cousin, Richard Paul and place them in the kitchen. A guard was stationed at the door.

Richard Paul identified undercover agent John Saunders as the Lowry Gang member who took a key from his pocket and unlocked the door to the store; it seems that the ex-Boston police officer had finally succeeded in infiltrating the ranks of the Lowry Gang completely.

The gang took a large amount of dry goods and groceries. While the robbery was in process, Davis Bullard arrived. He too was arrested and his mule and wagon were confiscated. The plunder was loaded in it. After depositing the plunder in their secret cave for safekeeping, Davis Bullard's mule and wagon were returned. It should be noted that Steve Lowry and undercover agent Saunders were the only ones recognized on this particular raid.

At the polls, the Conservatives were successful in winning back control of the county. Because the Republicans had not fulfilled all their campaign promises and obligations, the Republican Party did not receive the full support of the Indians and Blacks in the county. The only major post the Republicans were successful a winning was that of high sheriff. Sheriff Howell was re-elected. When the still unstable Republican Party was unable to raise Howell's official bond, however, the new Conservative courts awarded the office to a Conservative--Roderick McMillan! Henry Berry and his gang, no doubt, now realized the utter hopelessness of their desperate plight now that the cruel and sadistic McMillan was sheriff.

On August 17, 1870 the Lowry Gang allegedly went to the home of James D. Bridgers, the father of Mrs. Mary Norment (author of "The Lowrie History"); The gang made a lot of noise, supposedly, in hopes of inducing the inhabitants of the dwelling to come out into the open. Being unable to draw them out, Mrs. Norment alleges that Zack McLaughlin remarked: "Well, boys, we have come tonight for

blood, and must not be disappointed, we'll shoot the old man's cattle." James Bridgers and his two sons, John and A.C. Bridgers, returned the Gang's fire, thinking that the Lowry Gang was firing on the house. After a brief exchange of gunfire, the inhabitants, realizing the hopelessness of their plight, began blowing a trumpet, a prearranged distress signal for their neighbors to come to their aid. Shortly afterwards, the Lowry Gang departed.

On Sunday morning, Sept. 12, 1870 Henry Berry, Boss, Steve, Thomas and George Applewhite raided Alexander McMillan's. McMillan was at the gin-house in the process of constructing a coffin for a neighbor's child. The Lowry Gang took him and his family prisoners. They placed them in the kitchen and placed an armed guard at the door, Meanwhile, the rest of the Gang ransacked the house. At this robbery, reportedly, a large amount of wearing apparel and bed clothing were taken, plus guns and pistols and five dollars in cash.

From the Lowry Gang's actions on raids after McMillan was elected sheriff, it appears that they knew their chances of receiving a pardon were practically nonexistent. Henry Berry and his men knew that they could expect to be persecuted, especially by the savage and relentless new sheriff, Roderick McMillan. They were determined to fight fire with fire. The old, hard-core Conservatives were not interested in compromise. Revenge still smoldered in their bosoms. For the past 5 years, Henry Berry and his notorious gang had made a laughing stock of them. Now that the Conservatives were back in power, it would be pure folly to even consider that the Conservatives would forget the many years of humiliation Henry Berry had put them through.

On October 3, 1870 the Lowry Gang raided William McKay's farm, located near Floral College. They were allegedly searching for John Taylor who, rumor had it, moved in with McKay after his home and-store were recently burnt out. Mrs. McKay was John Taylor's sister.

The family was placed under guard. The house was ransacked. Everything of value was loaded on their wagon. A step-daughter was induced to play the piano for them. Upon leaving, Henry Berry remarked, "We need everything we're taking. The whites won't let me work like a man. They force me to hide out in the swamps. I have to live too. "

In the late morning hours of Tuesday, October 4, 1870 the Lowry Gang, aided by a cohort of approximately 12 whites raided the brandy distillery of Angus Leach, near Floral College. As the robbers helped themselves to Leach's brandy, discipline within their ranks crumbled. An armed guard was placed over old man Leach and a Black employee.

The rest of the men began taking everything in sight, including the brandy. They filled every keg, pitcher or container in sight. Still there were not enough containers to accommodate the large quantity of brandy on hand. After filling

their stomachs and every available container, the robbers began destroying the distillery.

At this point old man Leach attempted to stop the demolition of his distillery. The guard detailed to guard him struck Leach on the hip with the stock of his gun. The faithful Black employee rushed to his employer's aid. He was beaten with a wagon trace and his ears were sliced by a meaner member of the raiders. The raiders hauled off all they could carry and headed for Red Banks where George Applewhite resided. They left Leach free to do as he wished, believing that he would be afraid to go to the authorities because the distillery was illegal. By the time the robbers arrived at Applewhite's, most of them were drunk, the rest were well on their way to drinking themselves into a stupor. .

As soon as the Lowry Gang and cohort left, Leach sent the Black employee through the community to inform his neighbors of his misfortune, and with orders for them to form a posse. He went out in the opposite direction, spreading the same message. Soon, approximately 20 white neighbors were organized into a posse and they began tracking the Lowry Gang. The trail led them to George Applewhite's cabin at Red Banks.

The posse began firing into the cabin, catching the Lowry Gang by surprise. The gunfire had a sobering effect upon the outlawed members who, at once, grabbed up their guns and began returning the fire.

Word reached Shoe Heel. Capt. Mclean, from Shoe Heel, joined the posse with seven or eight men. The Lowrys were again surprised. McLean had come to Red Banks by way of the Lumberton road, on the other side of Lumbee River (the same side George Applewhite lived on). The Lowry Gang was not expecting anyone to pursue them on this side of the river.

The Lowrys rushed out of the cabin amidst the heavy firing. They retreated into an old pine field nearby. Firing intensified. Three of the members were wounded - - George Applewhite, Boss Strong and Henderson Oxendine. Word was spreading like an epidemic. Recruits were arriving by the droves. The Lowry Gang and cohort continued retreating. The wounded men were unable to go further. They set up a blind (an ambushade constructed by intertwining branches and limbs in such a manner that a man could hide behind them and go undetected).

About sunset, the posse advanced. Stephen Davis, a young white local war hero, led the charge with pistol drawn. Angus Mclean was also in front of the pack. Davis rushed into the midst of the Lowry Gang firing wildly. Reportedly, Henry Berry Lowry shot him through the head. He staggered into the swamp and disappeared from sight. Angus McLean was shot in the foot. He managed to swim to a nearby white planter's home by the name of Roberts, probably saving his life. The rest of the posse, momentarily thrown off balance, retreated. Mclean

and John Taylor, two leaders of the posse, decided visibility was too poor to continue trailing the outlaws further into the swamp. They decided to wait for daylight, and the arrival of Sheriff McMillan who would have more recruits.

Around 3 a.m. Wednesday morning, October 5, 1870, Sheriff Roderick McMillan arrived with James McBride, Donald Biggs, John G. Brown, and Frank Currie, four whites he had personally deputized. McMillan testified at the October term of Superior Court in Robeson County where John Taylor was tried for accessory before the fact to the murder of Malcolm Sanderson, an Indian. When asked if he officially summonsed anyone to help him search for the robbers he replied: "I had other men summonse John Patterson of Shoe Heel to summonse twenty men for me, but I had them as guards at Red Banks, they did not go out through the country to hunt the robbers. Robert Chaffin summonsed some for me. I don't recollect whether I had any other deputies out summonsing for me or not."

By the time all the men McMillan had out recruiting for him rendezvoused at the assigned meeting place, along with the whites from surrounding counties who had also been victimized by the Lowry Gang, there were over 150 armed and exasperated whites comprising the posse. "Men were coming in and out all the time after I got to Red Banks about 3 a.m. the 5th of October," Sheriff McMillan testified. With the added manpower, Taylor, McLean and McMillan, leaders of the men, resumed pursuit. They found the blood stains where the wounded Lowry Gang had waited in ambush. They also found the mortally wounded Stephen Davis who had crawled into the river to wash the blood from his wound. He was taken to Roberts' house and medical attention administered. Later he was taken by train to Maxton (Shoe Heel) where he died from the head wound, the bullet allegedly penetrating his brain. McMillan, fearing further pursuit of the Lowry Gang into the inhospitable swamps, decided on different strategy.

Long Swamp was a separate swamp by itself, being sealed off from the rest of the swamps by a pond. The Lowrys supposedly were trapped at Long Swamp and could not escape without coming out on higher ground, consequently exposing themselves to the white posse. McMillan surrounded Long Swamp with armed guards. He kept sending groups of armed whites through the center of the swamp in hopes of flushing the Lowry Gang out.

McMillan also sent a request to Gov. Holden asking for an artillery battery to aid him in apprehending the Lowry Gang. The artillery did not arrive until Nov. 12, 1870, however, too late to be of any use to McMillan at Long Swamp.

Word reached the posse which was stationed around Long Swamp that the Lowry Gang had been seen ten miles away from Long Swamp (where they supposedly were trapped). The posse of approximately 150 whites abandoned their trap at Long Swamp and started in pursuit of the Lowry Gang. The Lowry Gang had held up at Moss Neck, which was almost nothing but swamps. They knew it would be extremely difficult for the posse to flush them out. At this point,

the whole community was involved. Moss Neck was almost completely depopulated; those who did not join the posse in their search for the Lowrys left for Lumberton where they felt they would be protected from the wrath of the Lowry Gang who had vowed to destroy anyone and anything that got in their way.

CHAPTER SIX

John Taylor Charged With Accessory Before The Fact To The Murder of Sanderson

“... I then begged the Captain to let us pray, myself and Sanderson, the captain said you can pray quietly, Malcolm Sanderson was praying in a conversational tone, whereupon he told him to hush which seemed not to have any effect on Sanderson. The captain then punched Malcolm Sanderson in the face with his gun to make him pray in a lower tone of voice, after finishing our prayer to God the men said let us do what we are going to do ... “

(Court transcript, State of N.C. vs John Taylor in the Superior Court, Robeson County, October Term, 1870)

Sheriff Roderick McMillan, Captain Murdock Mclean and John Taylor, the three leaders of the approximately 150 armed and angry whites, all had one thing in common; they wanted to wipe the Lowry Gang scourge from the face of the earth. To arrive at this goal, as the posse tracked the Lowry Gang through the Moss Neck area, they began arresting anyone, no matter how remote their connection to the Lowry Gang, they thought had aided the Lowry Gang in any manner. This included practically every Indian in sight. During the melee, Andrew Strong (who was Rhoda & Boss' brother) and Malcolm Sanderson (who was married to one of Henderson Oxendine's sisters) were arrested. During the confusion of the arrest, Andrew Strong managed to escape and Malcolm Sanderson was murdered.

It was generally believed by the Indians and Blacks that John Taylor was head of the Ku Klux Klan. By some miracle, Andrew Strong succeeding in implicating Taylor in Sanderson's murder to the extent of having him charged with accessory before the fact to the murder of Malcolm (Make) Sanderson. The following is testimony by Andrew Strong at the October, 1870 term of Superior Court in Robeson County.

**State of N.C. vs. John Taylor
In The Superior Court
Robeson County
October Term. 1870**

TRANSCRIPT

“John Taylor charged with being accessory before the fact to the murder of Malcolm Sanderson on the night of Friday, the 7th of October or on the morning of Saturday the 8th.

“The defendant present. “

Andrew Strong called on the part of State and being sworn, testified as follows:

Question: Were you arrested lately and by whom?

Answer: Yes, but don't know the parties.

Question: Where were you arrested?

Answer: At Peter Dial's.

Q. What day were you arrested?

A. On the 7th of October.

Q. Had the persons who arrested you an other man with them whom you knew?

A. Yes. I saw Malcolm Sanderson, whom they had in charge.

Q. When they took you and S. away from Peter Dial's where did they carry you to next?

A. They carried us to Mr. Hugh Inman's.

Q. Did you ever see that rope on the table and if you did where? (Rope shown in court).

A. I saw it at Mr. Inman's tied to his bridle, and it was afterwards used to tie me and Malcolm Sanderson.

Q. How did this rope come in possession of the men who arrested you?

A. The leader of the gang took both plow lines from a bridle hanging on the comer of Mr. Inman's crib and put them in his pockets.

Q. After leaving Inman's, where did they carry you to next'?

A. They carried us to the cross roads where they (stopped at) a lane through Mr. Taylor's field and near his house.

Q. Did any of the crowd go to Mr. Taylor's house and if so what word did they bring back to the rest? .

OBJECTION: on the grounds this is hearsay evidence, over-ruled, defendant excepts.

A. Two of the crowd went to Mr. Taylors and reported that Taylor was not at home, but was at William C. McNeill's (his father-in-law).

Q. Up to this time did you meet anyone on the road whom you knew and if so. state who they were?

A. I saw Badger and J.J. McLauchlin and Giles Inman.

Q. Where were you first tied with the rope now in court'!

A. In Mr. Taylor's field.

Q. Did the tying take place before or after the two men you mention had returned from Mr. Taylor's house?

A. After they had returned from Mr. Taylor's house.

Q. How many of you were tied together, and in what manner?

A. Two. Malcolm Sanderson and myself, each of our arms were pinioned by our side from the elbows, and then we were tied together.

Q. Where did they carry you to next?

A. They carried us to W.C. McNeill's place and stopped in the lane.

Q. What time of the evening was it when they stopped you in the lane?

A. A little after dark, for the moon was shining.

Q. Did you observe any of the crowd leave and go in the direction of William C. McNeill's house?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How long was it before they returned to the main body?

A. A right smart little while!

Q. Did anyone whom you knew come back with them or near them, if so state who they were and how many?

A. William C. McNeill came on a few steps ahead of them.

Q. State what conversation, if any, passed between the parties in the lane after the arrival of William C. McNeill?

OBJECTION: on the ground that it does not appear that Mr. Taylor was present, mover-ruled.

A. Mr. McNeill said that there was nothing ready for supper there but would be in a short time, and looking down where I was, and the question being asked of him if he knew any of the men, said he did not, nor did he want to know them. The leader said that no man's name was to be called when they went to Mr. McNeill's house.

Q. After leaving the lane where did they carry you next?

A. We started on and went up the lane to W.C. McNeill's gate and were carried inside of the yard where I asked for a drink of water.

Q. Did you get the water you asked for and if so, by whom was it given and where?

A. We were carried over to the well. the left hand side of the house. Mr. McNeill accompanying us to keep off the dogs. After the guard had drunk, a Black man held up the bucket to the mouth of Malcolm Sanderson and to my mouth to drink as our hands were tied we could not do it for ourselves, after which they carried us round the house to the front steps.

Q. Did they leave you there on the front steps without anyone to guard you?

A. No, they had guards upon us all the while.

Q. Could you from your position while there guarded see the kitchen or the dining room?

A. No sir.

Q. Now tell the court where you first saw Mr. Taylor and what passed between you and him?

A. I saw Mr. Taylor on Mr. McNeill's front piazza coming out of the house and I either called him or bid him good evening, but he refused to speak to me and passed into the house; after some little time he returned to the piazza and talked

to another person a good long while, both leaning on the banisters, and talking' very low. I then called Mr. Taylor to me, telling him I had a word to say to him privately. He told me to speak what I had to say there. I told him to save my life and keep them from killing me, and he replied. 'All you mulattoes around (with a circling gesture of the both hands) were every one of you tumbling into hell fire and (stretching out his foot) if this foot could stop you from going by setting it on you. I would not do it.'

Q. When you asked Mr. Taylor to save you, what reason had you to suppose that the men who had you and Sanderson under arrest were going to kill you?

OBJECTION: on grounds not shown defendant was present; over-ruled.

A. The men told me that I had to die and would never see the sun rise again.

Q. Any time during that night, did Mr. Taylor charge you with committing any crime or doing him any wrong, and if so, state what he charged you with?

A. Yes, he said I had his store robbed, that I was spying around all day to have him robbed on that occasion, but did not say that he would do anything. Indeed, I was so impressed with the idea that I had to die that I paid little attention to anything but that alone.

Q. During any time of Friday night, did you hear Mr. Taylor say anything to the men as to what they should do with you?

OBJECTION: Leading question; over-ruled.

A. No sir. He said to the crowd that the mulattoes around had robbed him and burned him out and ... cost about \$5,000, or by them. Whereupon. one o(the men came to me and said you will not burn or rob any more.

OBJECTION AND MOTION TO STRIKE the latter part of the answer as not a response to the question. Over-ruled.

Q. Was this after or before you saw Mr. Taylor go with a party of three men into the lane and stay there some time together?

A. It was after.

Q. Where and when did you see Mr. Taylor last that night?

A. I saw him last after all had supper and were moving away from the house. I saw him in the lane in front of W.C. McNeill's house. I looked for him several limes afterwards, but could not discover him in the crowd.

Q. While in Mr. McNeill's yard on Friday night, the 7th of October, how often and by whom were you told you had to die before morning?

A. After we got to William C. McNeill's it was common talk among all the crowd that I had to die before morning. It was so common that they made no secret of it and would not give me anything to satisfy my personal wants, such as water, after I had first had some, or let me lie down on the piazza or in the yard.

Q. Do you remember of any of the words that any of them used when they said you had to die before morning?

OBJECTION: It does not appear that the defendant was present; over-ruled.

A. Their words were that I would not bum nor rob anymore, they told me some of ... very kindly that I had to die before morning and to make up my peace with God.

Q. During all this time was Malcolm Sanderson with you?

A. Yes he was.

Q. Did he Malcolm Sanderson beg any one to spare his life and if so whom did he beg.

A. Yes he begged for his life but the parties whom he begged are not in Court.

Q. Mention the different places where you heard him beg these men to spare his life?

OBJECTION: The defendant is not shown to have been present; over-ruled.

A. He told me all along that they were going to kill us, that they told him before they arrested me that they intended to kill him, and that he then begged them to spare his life, I heard him beg for his life after we left the road and were going into the woods where they were going to shoot us. He was weeping all the time because they were going to kill him.

Q. Did you hear him beg for his life in McNeill's yard or lane?

OBJECTION: It has not been shown that the defendant was present; over-ruled.

A. I heard him beg the men to spare his life in the lane when we first got there.

Q. Did any one whom you had not seen before with the crowd appear in the yard or in the house and take part in the prosecuting of the gang, if so what is his name?

Question withdrawn.

Q. Did you see one John Patterson that day at anytime and if so where and when did you see him?

OBJECTION; Not being material; over-ruled.

A. I saw him after we got to William C. McNeill's, I never saw him with the crowd before that time.

Q; What part did the said Patterson take in the proceedings of the crowd who had you under arrest?

OBJECTION: Defendant not shown to have been present; over-ruled.

A. He said I was one of the men who robbed Mrs. McKay's house and was the man who would not take pepper in my eggs because I had the clapp and that I had been missing out of the settlement a week or a ... night and that Sanderson was one of the men who shot at the citizens on Tuesday morning and was known to all the robberies in the county.

Q. Did you see this Patterson consulting at any time that night with John Taylor or with any other parties in the crowd at William C. McNeill's?

A. I never, as far as I can recollect, saw him talk with Mr. Taylor but saw him consulting with the balance of the crowd frequently.

Q. Was it as well understood by all the crowd in W. C. McNeill's yard that Malcolm Sanderson had to die before morning as it was that you had to die?

OBJECTION: Leading question; over-ruled.

A. O Yes Sir. When they would say for us to make our peace with God for we would not see the sun rise tomorrow morning, they would say the words 'both of you.'

Q. After carrying you from the road to the edge of the woods state to the Court all that, occurred to you and Sanderson together until you parted from the said Sanderson.

A. The captain (Murdock Mclean) said boys if you have anything to say, say it for you will die in a few minutes. Malcolm Sanderson spoke first, said Captain I think you ought to give me a trial, I am a hard laboring man and can be proven such. Patterson replied, yes you did that -- shooting up the road and are known to all these robberies. Sanderson said Captain please give me a trial. Here is Mr. Wessel in Lumberton who can prove that I drove his team for five months until he

sold it. Sanderson was then ordered to stop speaking and let me speak. After I had been speaking for some time, John Patterson stopped me and said 'boys do what you are, going to do'. I then begged the Captain to let us pray, myself and Sanderson, the Captain said you can pray quietly, Malcolm Sanderson was praying in a conversational tone, whereupon he told him to hush which seemed not to have any effect on Sanderson. The captain then punched Malcolm Sanderson in the face with his gun to make him pray in it lower tone of voice, after finishing our prayer to God the men said let us do what we are going to do. One of the men then gave the command-form a line. Another asked if we were to be shot tied together when someone answered no, separate them, Captain said No. 2 step out, and four men stepped out with guns, next command was take the man to the right meaning myself being the nearest to the right; he told one of the men to take the other meaning Sanderson, when two of the four men untied our arms, they were bound together as before stated, and tied us by the wrists behind our backs separated from each other. I saw Malcolm Sanderson, while on his knees take his knife out of his jacket and give it to Patterson with a request to give the same to his, Sanderson's wife: Then I saw one of the men pull the hat over Sanderson's face. They marched us in there to the edge of the bay. When we got in the bay one of the men stepped into these waters and said there is water here, this place won't do, to which replied, let us get out of the bay of these snags. They then halted us for the purpose of shooting us. By this time I got my hands loose from the rope and fled for my life leaving Sanderson standing with his hat drawn over his eyes. as I heard the first volley fired at myself I could hear the voice of Sanderson saying O Lord, I never saw Sanderson after; the last I seen or heard of him was when I heard him say O, Lord."

This ends the first day of testimony by Andrew Strong.

Sanderson was murdered as planned. His body was discovered 2 days later by a Black ex-slave in the swamp below William C. McNeill's mill.

Sufficient evidence was found to hold John Taylor until he could be tried for accessory before the fact to the murder of Malcolm Sanderson. The Reverend James Sinclair, the presiding judge at the preliminary hearing, ordered that Taylor be held without bond in the Lumberton jail to await the next session of Superior Court in Robeson County, at which time he would be tried for accessory before the fact to the murder of Malcolm Sanderson.

Rev. James Sinclair stated in his findings that Taylor's preliminary hearing was just one of many cases on the roster of similar nature and he hoped his ruling would serve as an example and as a deterrent. His ruling achieved neither goal.

Roderick McMillan and a host of wealthy Conservative white leaders in the county were indignant at the idea of a prominent white such as Taylor being held in jail just for killing" ... a damned nigger and spy for the Lowerys." Taylor's friends had kept an important witness for the prosecution (Ben Strickland) hid.

Sinclair's court had issued a warrant for his appearance in court because the prosecution relied heavily upon his testimony. Sheriff McMillan had failed to serve the warrant on Strickland, however. It was believed by Taylor's white Conservative friends that evidence would be too flimsy without Strickland's testimony. They felt sure Taylor would be acquitted. Quite naturally, they were surprised, and worried, when sufficient evidence was found at the preliminary hearing to hold Taylor without bond.

Taylor's friends put their heads together and arrived at a plan of action to release Taylor from jail. Sheriff McMillan took Taylor to Rockingham, in Richmond County, where court was already in session. The presiding judge was the honorable Daniel L. Russell, supposedly a friend of the Indians and Blacks. In a ruling out of the ordinary, Russell released Taylor on payment of a \$500 bond. The circumstances surrounding Russell's decision are quite interesting.

Thomas Russell, Judge Daniel Russell's brother, was one of the whites who participated in the murder of "Make" Sanderson. McMillan informed Judge Russell that should a prominent white such as Taylor be convicted, then Thomas Russell (Judge Russell's brother) would not have an iota of a chance. McMillan and his friends readily mustered up the \$500 bond and John Taylor returned to the Scuffletown area a free man, pending the next term of Superior Court in Robeson.

Taylor, his wife and son, moved in with his father-in-law, William C. McNeill. He immediately began preparations with Martin Ransom, an Indian spokesman for the Sanderson family, to come to some type of monetary agreement with the bereaved family. The family wanted justice, however, therefore they turned down the blood money. Taylor then began selling his property. Henry Berry had already warned that if the courts failed to punish Taylor, he would. Taylor was planning on leaving the county as soon as he could dispose of his property. It was taking longer than he anticipated to dispose of his property, however.

Undercover cop John Saunders finally managed to infiltrate the ranks of the Lowry Gang completely. He informed Henry Berry that the authorities were closing in on him and his men. Their only recourse, he told Henry Berry, was for the whole Lowry Gang to leave the country. Saunders suggested that they migrate to Mexico. As any true friend would do, he agreed to drive the wagon for them while the Lowry Gang and family remained hidden inside out of sight. On November 19, 1870 at least 2 wagons were packed and loaded with the families of the Lowry Gang, prepared for departure. The trip failed to take place, however.

By keeping an eye on Saunders. Henry Berry discovered a "secret camp" established by Saunders near William C. McNeill's saw mill. As previously mentioned, John Taylor was McNeill's son-in-law. Taylor was suspected of being the head of the Robeson County Ku Klux Klan. For this reason, Taylor was an

arch enemy of Henry Berry Lowry and the Lowry Gang. For this reason, Henry Berry became suspicious when he discovered Saunders' "secret camp" near the enemy's headquarters.

When Henry Berry halted plans for the trip. Saunders called a special meeting at the "secret camp" with a number of whites in the county whom he had taken into his confidence. Malcolm McNeill, one of William C. McNeill's sons, was approaching the "secret camp." The meeting was to be held at 4 O' clock Sunday. Nov. 20, 1870. Malcolm did not arrive until 7:00 p.m. The following is a statement prepared by Malcolm McNeill.

"When I approached within a short distance of the camp. I saw the young men I was to meet there. They immediately informed me that the camp was surrounded by the robbers, and that if I attempted to escape. I would be shot. I halted and made a movement to draw my pistol, when four men arose among the bushes. and presenting their cocked guns, warned me that I was a prisoner, and that I would be fired upon if I did not immediately surrender. These men I recognized as Henry B. Lowrie. Stephen Lowrie, George Applewhite and Boss Strong. H.B. took my repeater from me, saying that I might make myself at home, as they would take care of me that night. I then took my position with the other prisoners around the camp fire; but after a short time H.B. Lowrie summoned me to go with him a short distance from the camp; he then turned and addressed me in the following language: 'God damn your soul, I want to know where Sanders is. You know all about him; a respectable white man, and one you do not suspect, has told me you are harboring him, and doing all you can to assist him in hunting us down. I'm straight on your track now God damn you, and if you don't tell all about Saunders. I'll kill you right here; I intend to kill you anyhow, as soon as we get Saunders.' He asked me when I saw Saunders. I replied, last Saturday week. He then escorted me back to the camp, and very soon Stephen Lowrie took me out for a chat; he asked me about the same questions as Henry B. had, and received the same answers -- he also made the same threats, and charged me with harboring Sanders. We passed the whole night in camp -- the prisoners occupying Sanders' quarters (Mr. Sanders was absent at the time), and the robbers stationed around us. During the night Stephen Lowrie exhibited to me a pack of cards, which he said he bought at the Scotch Fair, and boasted of his boldness in visiting that place. Messengers were sent at intervals through the night in two different directions from the camp, apparently to confer with parties stationed a short distance off. About daylight the robbers became impatient, and began to look out as for the arrival of some one whom they expected to come in at that hour. Soon after daylight Stephen Lowrie went out alone in the direction of Moss Neck; after he had been gone about ten minutes, I heard several voices a short distance from the camp cry, 'halt!' One of them I recognized as the voice of Stephen Lowrie, the others of the men whom I had not seen in the camp; I also heard a voice which I recognized to be that of Sanders say, 'I surrender.' Henry B. Lowrie, George Applewhite and Henderson Oxendine now left us and ran out in the direction of the voices, leaving us in charge of Boss Strong. H. B. and

Stephen Lowrie returned to the camp singing and rejoicing, saying that they had got the buck they wanted. H.B. Lowrie then approached me and said, 'God damn you, will you tell a straight tale now? You said you hadn't seen Sanders since Saturday week damn you, you saw him last Saturday.' Stephen Lowrie then took me aside and said, 'Henry Berry is mad with you -- he is mad "enough to kill you, and I am afraid he will kill you, but I'll try to prevent it.' Henry Berry then called me aside and said, 'Now God damn you, you've been doing all you could against me -- you've been harboring this man Sanders and trying to have us captured -- I've got a notion to kill you right here, but if you'll promise me to leave the country I believe I'll let you off this time, but if I ever get hold of you again, you may look out.' He then returned the pistols that had been taken from the other prisoners, but he kept mine, saying he would take care of it. He then told me he would give me a little advice: 'I might go to Moss Neck and run my shebang, -- I might have a guard there if I wished, but he would advise me to leave the country, and leave immediately.' Said he, 'You are young, stout, healthy, and able to do good business; I hate to interfere with you, but you have done so much against us, I've got a notion to kill you. Tell your father if he will stay at home and let us alone he needn't be afraid, but he must walk a chalk line.' They then sent me and the other young men they had captured off in one direction, and they moved off in an opposite direction. I did not see Sanders, as he was not brought into the camp, but I recognized his voice in pronouncing the words 'I surrender,' when halted near the camp."

The Lowry Gang took Saunders to their secret camp in Back Swamp, the Devil's Den, located between Inman's Bridge and Back Swamp. There were eight Lowry Gang members present, faced with the problem of what to do with undercover cop Saunders. These eight men were: Henry Berry, Steve, Tom, Andrew & Boss Strong, Henderson Oxendine, George Applewhite and Zack McLaughlin.

While the gang bickered among themselves, Saunders attempted suicide. Henderson Oxendine stated in his alleged confession that "he got a knife one time and cut a vein in his wrist so he could bleed to death. But it didn't bleed a great deal."

Andrew Strong, who was a relatively new member of the Lowry Gang, wanted to let Saunders go with orders to leave the country. Quite naturally, Saunders was more than willing to accept such terms. He told them he would leave and never bother them any more. Henry Berry and Steve, however, felt that they should execute Saunders because his scheme to have them intercepted in Georgia endangered the lives of their families. Tom Lowry also pleaded for Saunders' life.

Saunders gave Andrew Strong his pen knife, the one he used when he attempted suicide. Strong told him: "God knows I pity you, for I have been in the very presence of death myself ... , and I can understand your feelings."

Andrew was successful at persuading the rest of the Lowry Gang to allow Saunders to take an arsenic tablet that George Applewhite had. Saunders took the supposedly fatal arsenic tablet. The Lowry Gang waited for three days. If anything, however, Saunders looked even healthier after taking the tablet. Henry Berry proposed then that they draw lots to see who would perform the unwanted task of killing Saunders. Steve Lowry won the task.

Thursday night the Lowry Gang told Saunders that his time was up. He was allowed to pray. Steve Lowry then emptied both barrels of his shotgun. Saunders died instantly.

Andrew Strong remained behind after the rest of the gang had left. He buried Saunders after wrapping the body in a blanket. The next day Strong mailed Mrs. Saunders a letter Saunders had written her, plus a photograph found among his personal effects. Said Henry Berry Lowry, "We were compelled to kill Saunders in order to save ourselves. We all pitied him."

Mr. David Townsend's farm was raided in November, 1870. Four members of the Lowry Gang allegedly hailed at the gate. Mr. Jones, a man employed by Mr. Townsend, went to the gate to see who it was. After talking with Jones for a while, the Lowry Gang members requested Jones to go in and tell Mrs. Townsend that they were there and wished to come in. Jones started in. The Lowry Gang followed him inside the house. They requested something to eat. Mrs. Townsend had supper brought into the room where they were sitting.

Henry Berry did not eat anything, but the others -- George Applewhite, Henderson Oxendine and Boss Strong -- ate heartily. Mrs. Townsend asked them if they wanted anything else. They told her they wanted some potatoes. She sent Mr. Jones out with them to the potato-hill where they had left their sacks. They took about five bushels of potatoes and left without further incident.

As previously mentioned, Zack McLaughlin was considered "white trash" by his white neighbors because he grew up with, and was raised among the "mulattoes." McLaughlin stayed with his mother. At nights he would accompany the Lowry Gang on raids on their white neighbors. Soon, it became known that he was a full-fledged member of the Lowry Gang. Sheriff McMillan, along with a posse, visited the McLaughlin home. No plunder could be found. Nevertheless, McLaughlin was arrested. He was carried to Red Banks where he was reportedly recognized by a Mr. Register, a white planter who was recently robbed and allegedly recognized McLaughlin although he was "blackened at the time" of the raid on his farm. He was taken to Lumberton and placed in jail. The white youth soon escaped, however and joined the Lowry Gang in earnest.

On the night of December 21, 1870 a local white, Henry Biggs, met McLaughlin at Noah Duncan's, another local white. After supper McLaughlin asked Biggs to walk out with him. After going a short distance from the house. McLaughlin

allegedly drew his pistol and began cursing Biggs. He told Biggs that he had been trying long enough to persuade him to join the Lowry Gang. "Tonight," McLaughlin said, "I'll compell you to accompany me while robbing some cabins belonging to turpentine hands in the area." The unarmed Biggs accompanied McLaughlin.

The cabin inhabitants were all sleeping soundly. The two whites had no difficulty in robbing them. Reportedly, McLaughlin became drunk after leaving the cabins. The two did not go far before McLaughlin complained that he was sleepy. He ordered Biggs to start a fire. As soon as the fire was made, McLaughlin lay down with his gun under his head and a belt around his waist with 3 large-sized pistols in it. He made Biggs lay down, too. As McLaughlin began snoring soundly, Biggs reached over him and withdrew a pistol from his belt. He held the muzzle to the back of McLaughlin's head and fired. Biggs then leaped over the body and fired again. He then reported to a local justice of the peace in Lumberton. A posse accompanied him back to the spot of the murder to identify the body. A reward of \$200 was paid by the county to Biggs for murdering McLaughlin.

McLaughlin became the first constant member of the Lowry Gang to perish.

CHAPTER SEVEN

John Taylor Murdered Ben Bethea Murdered Henderson Oxendine Hanged

"The night I was captured I was at George's. George left a while after dark, and didn't say where he was going. I concluded to stay all night. I heard the men when they first knocked at the house, I got up one time, took my gun and walked through the house; then I saw no use to shoot and be killed by them -- so I lay down and waited for them to come in and take me..."

(Henderson Oxendine's alleged confession as appeared in February, 1951 Historical Edition of the "Robesonian")

Months passed slowly by, and by January, 1871 Taylor was still walking around a free man. He was not idle during this time, however. Knowing that Henry Berry abided by his word, Taylor began making preparations to dispose of his vast property and assets. As previously mentioned, however, there was some hold up in disposing of his land.

On January 14, 1871 John Taylor and Malcolm McNeil (Taylor's wife's brother) were walking along on their way to Taylor's store at Moss Neck. They were walking along the mill dam in sight of Moss Neck, at approximately the same location Sanderson had recently been murdered, when there was an ear-shattering blast. Taylor and McNeil were only 200 yards from a federal camp of soldiers who were camping in the area looking for the Lowry Gang. The blast scorched McNeill's face and Taylor crumpled instantly dead at his feet. Part of Taylor's head was blown away and his brains allegedly were scattered in the river. McNeill, looking through the blood trickling down his cheeks, "saw Henry Berry standing not 8 feet away." Henry Berry calmly removed a pistol and fifty dollars from Taylor's pockets. He then moved the body so that it would be out of sight of the federal soldiers, then he disappeared into Bear Swamp below the dam.

A federal soldier who witnessed the scene arrived shortly thereafter and gave chase. He pursued Henry Berry through Bear Swamp for approximately half a mile. He lost Henry Berry's trail, however, and was forced to turn back.

He returned back to the site of the murder just as the rest of the troop was arriving. The commander in charge sent a message to Lumberton requesting more reinforcements. The troops camped in Lumberton arrived shortly thereafter,

as did Sheriff McMillan with a posse of twenty men. They all started tracking Henry Berry again. The search was in vain, however. Henry Berry had disappeared once again. It seemed that once again the swamps had swallowed Henry Berry.

On Friday, February 17, 1871, Sheriff Roderick McMillan organized a posse and went in search of the Lowry Gang. More likely than not, this Lowry Hunt was used as a cover to conceal the real intent of the angry whites. According to the white's warped way of thinking during those turbulent years of Reconstruction, not to retaliate against the Lowry Gang for the murder of John Taylor would be a sure sign of weakness.

According to W. McKee Evans, author of "To Die Game," "A portion of this posse was composed of mounted young men who roamed at large through the settlement without any responsible head to guide them. Filled with liquor and animosity against the colored race (the whites lumped the Blacks and Indians into one group), they came to the house of one Benjamin Bethea, a freedman of good character, about dark on Saturday evening."

Benjamin Bethea was a Black used by the Republican Party to keep the Blacks and Indians "united in votes and sentiment." He preached to the Blacks and Indians on the beliefs of the Republican Party and denounced the Conservatives continuously. It is safe to assume that Bethea was one of the most hated Blacks in Robeson County.

This posse of 18 whites, at the onset, was headed by the county coroner, Robert Chaffin. As the posse neared Bethea's cabin, one of their number proposed taking Bethea out and lynching him. Chaffin was afraid such actions would jeopardize his job. He, and a handful of others, turned back. John Taylor's brother-in-law, Malcolm McNeil, long active in the campaign to rid the county of the Lowry Gang, took charge of the remaining 10 men. They continued on their way to Bethea's cabin.

McNeill knocked on the door of the crudely-built cabin. Bethea answered the door. "Come out here! We want you!" McNeill ordered.

Bethea turned to his wife and said, "Old woman I specs theys gwine to kill me. Mebbe I'll never come back no mo.'

The Black was lifted bodily from the porch and placed on a horse. After the posse left with Bethea, his wife ran and notified Henry Berry Lowry.

Henry Berry and his men found the body 4 miles from Bethea's cabin, dumped in the swamps. Henry Berry noted that the Black ex-slave had been beaten severely before being shot. After checking the body himself, Henry Berry turned the body over to Coroner Chaffin. Chaffin's findings: "Death by gunshot wounds

at the hands of a person or persons unknown.” Chaffin could not have been too surprised.

Rev. James Sinclair, a justice of the peace from Lumberton, issued warrants for the arrest of the nine white youths who he alleged were members of the “band of ku klux scoundrels” who murdered Ben Bethea.

The grand jury threw the case out of court, however, citing the failure to find sufficient evidence to warrant bringing the men to trial as the reason for its actions.

Judge Russell, whose brother was involved in the murder of Make Sanderson, issued warrants for the nine’s arrest, protesting the findings of the grand jury. Sheriff McMillan returned the warrants, informing Judge Russell that he could not locate the parties. Judge Russell then proclaimed the nine to be outlaws, wanted dead or alive.

On February 26, 1871 Henderson Oxendine was arrested at the home of George Applewhite by the following young whites: John S. McNeill, Angus Archie McNeill, William McNeill, John K. McNeill, Alexander McNeill, Daniel McNeill, Hector McNeill, David McNeill, Archie D. McCallum, W. Frierson Buie, Frank McKay, George W. McKay and Archibald Brown.

The thirteen bounty hunters realized that although the Lowry Gang members lived in the swamps, they made infrequent visits to their homes. They had learned from undercover agent Saunders that George Applewhite was living about 25 miles away in South Carolina and that he made infrequent visits to his home in the Red Banks area to visit his wife and children.

The thirteen whites learned that George Applewhite’s wife was pregnant and that the child was due any minute. They figured that the former slave would be making one of his infrequent visits to see his wife before the baby was born. They surrounded Applewhite’s cabin on the night of February 26, 1871 at approximately 10 p.m. and waited impatiently until daybreak.

The bounty hunters were right. Applewhite visited his wife. Unlike his two brothers-in-law, however, Applewhite left shortly after nightfall. Henderson and Forney (Pop) Oxendine decided to spend the night with their sister.

That night the two were sleeping soundly when Henderson heard a disturbance outside. He grabbed up his gun and went to the window to check and see what the cause of the sound was. Much to his dismay, he realized that the house was surrounded. Realizing that there was no possible way of escape, Henderson went back to bed and lay down beside his brother. Soon he was sleeping soundly again.

At dawn the bounty hunters made their bid. They rushed the house, calling out and demanding admittance. When no answer came from within, they broke down the door and rushed in. In the front room they found Applewhite's pregnant wife, along with her children. They proceeded to check the rest of the house. In the back room, sound asleep, were Henderson and Fomey Oxendine. Forney was wearing a belt and holster around his waist. In the holster was a pistol. Leaning against the wall, near the head of the bed, was a double-barreled shotgun. The bounty hunters woke up the brothers, who surrendered without resistance or incident.

To ensure against another amazing jailbreak, Henderson Oxendine was shackled in the Lumberton jail and guarded 24-hours-a-day by a company of federal soldiers.

When Henderson Oxendine's case came before court, he was charged with the murder of Stephen Davis, a local white war hero who was killed while rushing a Lowry Gang ambush during the Brandy Raid. His court-appointed lawyer also assisted the prosecution at the trial.

It has been said that justice should be swift and sure. This definitely applies to the Oxendine case. He was found guilty of the trumped-up charge of murdering Davis and sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until dead" March 17, 1871. This was only 19 days after he was arrested.

There was a circus atmosphere in Lumberton the day Henderson Oxendine was to be hanged. It seemed everyone wanted to witness the gruesome execution and see how a notorious Lowry Gang member would act in the face of death. Would he defy death by spitting in his face, or would he die a whimpering coward?' Almost every tree top and house top was covered by the sadistic and curious white onlookers in Lumberton. Many sat for as much as 3 hours in a drenching rain just for the chance to witness the gruesome scene.

Although he wrote in a letter to his brother Calvin: "...you have never known the agony I have endured the past few days...", you would never have known it by his actions.

On the day of his execution, he walked to the foot of the ladder leading up to the gallows and certain death, with steady step. He ascended the ladder and opened a hymn book. He sang "And Shall I Yet Delay." Then he sang "Amazing Grace." After singing the two hymns in a clear, controlled voice, he bowed his head in prayer for a short time with a handkerchief held to his face. He then handed the hymn book and handkerchief to Sheriff Roderick McMillan and looked around at the curious onlookers as if he were looking for someone.

The executioner was a white bounty hunter and drifter named Frank Marden. He was, a white drifter who would do almost anything for a dollar.

Marden climbed the ladder. He tied the condemned man's hands and feet. A black hood was placed over Oxendine's head. At 12:30 Marden cut the rope. The trap fell. After sixteen minutes the body was pronounced dead by a physician. The body was delivered to the mother of the deceased who removed it to the country and gave her son a decent burial.

The following is reprinted from the February, 1951 Historical Edition of the Robesonian.

"The following is the confession of the condemned man, as written down by His Honor Judge Russell, the day after the sentence of death was passed upon him, the material facts of which have since been several times repeated to others without variations.

"I got out of Wilmington jail, and went up to the settlement. I don't know much about how we got out -- we just broke out -- nobody from outside helped us that I know of. We went to the railroad and crossed first river over the bridge, and then took up towards South river -- got across Cape Fear on a raft. We didn't get much to eat -- knocked over a pig once and cooked it over fire -- had no bread. It was over 4 weeks before, we got to Scuffletown.

Bock at Scuffletown

"I did not see H.B. Lowry for a week after I got back. George, Steph. and myself got out of Wil. jail together. Steph. got with Henry Berry before I did. I first met Henry at his own house. He and Stephen were there. I first saw Henry Berry's wife a little way from the gate, and she told me that Henry Berry and Stephen were in the house, and I went in. I have not slept in a house since I left Wil. jail except once or twice in Henry Berry's, and a few times in George Applewhite's.

Captured

"The night I was captured I was at George's. George left a while after dark and didn't say where he was going. I concluded to stay all night. I heard the men when they first knocked at the house. I got up one time, took my gun and walked through the house; then I saw no use to shoot and be killed by them -- so I lay down and waited for them to come in and take me. My brother Pop had nothing to do with the gang. He was in charge of Geo. Applewhite's house -- staid there.

"I was at Leach's -- Henry Berry, Boss Strong. Stephen Lowry, George Applewhite, Zach McLauchlin and myself -- we took Leach's brandy etc.

"I do not know anything about the McLeod murder -- never heard Henry Berry or any of them say anything about it.

"I never heard any of them say anything about the robbing of Jas. H. McQueen.

"I knew nothing about the killing of Norment -- never heard who killed him, until since I have been in jail I have heard somebody say that Zach. McLauchlin killed him -- I have heard Henry Berry say that Norment was a meddlesome fellow, and laugh about his being taken off, but said he didn't kill him.

"Before God I was not at the King murder -- I have never heard Henry Berry or any of them say who did kill King. Have heard Henry Berry or George Applewhite say that they thought John Dial was paid to swear as he did. John Dial was in the gang before we were captured in August 1869.

"Tom Lowry was not in the Davis fight. That is so -- and I say it is so, as I expect soon to meet my God. There were there: Henry Berry, Boss, Steph., George and myself -- ...(torn)... the crowd.

"We had just been at Geo. Applewhite's eating our dinner and drinking -- we weren't in the habit of going there to eat, but did that day -- did not keep a guard outside while we were eating. We knew they were hunting for us, but did not know they were on that side of the creek; if they had come up a little sooner they would have found us in the house. We were all wounded in the fight but Henry Berry. I was shot in the arm, Steph. and George each in the side, and Boss right in the forehead, the ball glancing downward.

"Henry Berry, Steph. and Boss were the men that killed John Taylor -- so they told me. Tom Lowry or Steph., or some of them - I don't exactly remember which told me a day or two before Taylor was killed that Henry Berry said he be damn'd if he didn't take old Taylor off. I heard Henry Berry say that he and Boss and Steph. killed him.

"All the crowd were at the killing of Sanders -- Henry Berry, Boss, Steph., George, myself, Tom Lowry, Andrew Strong and Zach McLauchlin.

Brandy Still

"Tom Lowry found where there was a brandy still hidden in the swamp, and insisted that we should go and capture it. We went there on Sunday. While we were there two or three men came up at different times and separately; as they would come in we would make them prisoners. After a while the three McNeill's came in all together, and we made them prisoners. We kept them all night, and next (Monday) morning, early after day, Sanders came down there, and we got him. We turned loose the whole crowd except Sanders. Henry Berry told them to go and to keep their mouths shut. He told McNeill that he had caught him in three lies; he would let him go this time, but he had better behave himself.

"We carried Sanders off to our camp, and kept him until the following Wednesday evening. We were talking and disputing all this time what we had better do with him -- I told them several times they had better let him go; but Henry Berry and Stephen swore that he should be killed -- Henry Berry and Steph stuck to it all the time; Sanders didn't have much to say. We would have one standing guard over him at night.

"He said several times if we would let him go, he would go clear off and never bother us any more. -- he seemed very stubborn and proud while we had him at the camp; he got a knife one time and cut a vein in his wrist so he could bleed to death; but it didn't bleed a great deal -- then he took arsenic -- Geo. Applewhite had some in his pocket and gave it to him -- he put it in his mouth and swallowed it. It didn't seem to do much -- he didn't complain of pain -- said one time he felt it burning in his stomach.

"On Wednesday evening they took him out from the camp and carried him off some distance, and then all stopped. Stephen Lowry told him that he might have an hour to pray. He prayed a good while. I felt sorry for him, and told them they had better let the man go. - Henry Berry and Steph swore he shouldn't.

"I turned a little and stepped off, for I saw that they (were) going to kill him. -- Just then, Steph. shot one barrel of his gun into him, and he fell dead. Tom Lowry was off two or three hundred yards when Stephen killed him -- Tom sorta lagged behind.

Comes As Teacher

"Sanders first came into the settlement as a school teacher and a friend of the colored people. I never knew Henry Berry to be with him but once. Henry Berry never went about his schoolhouse. They killed him because he had come and tried to pass off for a friend and they betrayed them. I told where Sanders was buried. (The body has been found from this description.)

"We never had any friends in particular among the colored people of Scuffletown. We have always known what was going on. We would find that out in plenty of ways -- Henry Berry's wife would hear and tell him, and so would Geo. Applewhite's -- I never went about my father's since I've been lying out. I knew he was opposed to the gang, and I was afraid of him. I met my mother once on the road and talked with her -- have seen her since I have been here, and want to see her again before I die.

"I have heard Lowry say that his folks were against him, except Tom, and that his brother Sinclair Lowry would betray him if he had a chance. -- James Oxendine has never had anything to do with any of us. I have never heard of any of the crowd being about his place. Henry Berry is down on him -- he's particular mad with him because they say that he caused the soldiers to be brought up there. I

have heard Henry Berry abuse Mr. Sinclair -- none of them have much use for him. I don't like the man myself. He is the man that got me into this scrape. If he had given me justice he would not have sent me to the Wilmington jail on a charge I was not guilty of, and I would not have had to take (to) the woods, and go with Henry Berry.

"There has been nobody in Lumberton sending any word to us that ever I heard of -- While they were trying Taylor for the murder of Make Sanderson, Andrew Strong was the witness against Taylor. He was then going backwards and forwards from us to Lumberton. Every time he left Lumberton he came to us. He said they tried to kill him when they killed Make Sanderson. Make Sanderson never had anything to do with us -- I never heard of his being connected in any of the robberies.

Dead "Nigger."

"I saw the dead body of Ben Bethea. Henry Berry, Boss and myself were going along the road and met Andrew Strong; Andrew said there was a dead nigger down in the branch; we went down and found Ben Bethea's body. We knocked about there -- one or two white men passed the road, and we stopped them and showed it to them. I never heard of Ben Bethea's having had anything to do with us or any of Henry Berry's crowd. Henry Berry and one of his brothers, a Lowry, who is now dead, killed Brant Harris."

Also in the month of February, 1871, Mr. John McNair was stopped while on his way to Red Banks. About a mile from Red Banks, he was met by Henry Berry, Boss, Steve and Tom who were traveling in a turpentine wagon. Henry Berry ordered McNair to stop. Steve Lowry caught the bridle of McNair's horse. Henry Berry and Boss went up to McNair, took hold of him by his hands, one on each side of him, and asked him if he had a pistol. He told them he didn't have a gun, then he pushed Boss from him. Boss allegedly took McNair's buggy whip and struck him across the head with it one time and Henry Berry, allegedly struck him across the head with his pistol.

Henry Berry then searched his pockets, taking his pocket book and a number of letters that he was carrying to the post office to be mailed. Henry Berry handed the letters to Tom Lowry. He kept the pocket book and stepped to one side to examine its contents.

After examining the pocket book, Henry Berry turned to McNair and asked him if he would like to have his pocket book back and go back home, or would he like for him to keep the pocket book and let McNair go on to Red Banks. McNair told Henry Berry that he had business at Red Banks and intended going there unless they killed him. He wanted both the pocket book and letters, he informed Henry Berry.

McNair so impressed Henry Berry with his bravery, that he gave him back his pocket book telling him that since it only had \$15 in it he would not take it. He also ordered Tom Lowry to give him 2 of the 5 letters taken from him. McNair was ordered to go on his way but not to tell anyone about meeting them.

The following notation can be found in "An Unpublished Diary of Col. Francis Marion Wishart"; "J.C. Saunders -- Jury of inquest March 15, 1871, found that Saunders came to his death from gunshot wounds at the hands of eight of the gang (named), Saunders sold books and charts, among the Freedmen, and opened a school for the mulattoes..."

In April, 1871, Malcolm McNeill (John Taylor's brother-in-law), Faulk Floyde and nine other whites, the bulk of whom were outlawed by Judge Russell, entered the dense, jungle-like swamps interspersed throughout Scuffletown. Said one, "We will not leave these swamps until we rid the county of Henry Berry Lowry and the Lowry Gang!"

The eleven money and fame-hungry whites were encouraged shortly after making their agreement. On April 8, 1871 they spotted the entire Lowry Gang in the swamps. The Lowry Gang did not see them. Being well aware of the Lowry Gang's reputation as marksmen, the eleven whites decided it in their best interest not to engage the Lowry Gang in a gun battle.

The bounty hunters decided to return home and meet again at A. & W. McQueen's Store on the night of April 15, 1871. At this meeting they would decide upon the best strategy to employ in their quest to annihilate the Lowry Gang.

Saturday night, April 15, however, only five of the original eleven whites showed up at the designated meeting place. They were George A. McKay, Franklin McKay, W.H. McCallum, Archie D. McCallum and J. Douglas McCallum.

The other six, which included Malcolm McNeill and Faulk Floyde, were recently outlawed by Judge Russell. This is probably why they failed to show up.

The two McKays and three McCallums decided to continue with their plan to capture George Applewhite. The five figured Applewhite would be visiting his family the following day, which was Sunday. The whites managed to reach Applewhite's cabin unnoticed. Each man prepared a blind along the foot path leading up to the cabin. Their vigil lasted throughout the night and well into the next day.

At approximately 4 o'clock in the evening of the next day (Sunday), the former slave was spotted walking toward the cabin. When he arrived within twenty paces of W. H. McCallum's blind, the white bounty hunter rose instantly and fired. His bullet struck Applewhite in the neck. The former slave immediately began

returning the fire as he turned his back and prepared to make good his escape into the swamp. At this point Frank McKay rose from his blind and shot him in the back. Applewhite still remained on his feet and continued retreating toward the swamp. As he neared the edge of the swamp, George A. McKay and J. Douglas McCallum rose also and fired upon him. Bleeding profusely, the former slave finally managed to reach the safety of the swamp. The five white bounty hunters feared pursuing Applewhite into the swamp. They were certain, however, that the outlawed Lowry Gang member was dead.

They retrieved a sack containing a pair of shoes and a hat which was dropped by Applewhite. The whites then rushed to Lumberton to notify Sheriff McMillan that they had murdered the notorious outlaw, George Applewhite.

Sheriff McMillan arrived soon with a posse of about 20, along with Coroner Chaffin and a jury of inquest. They failed to find Applewhite's body, however.

The body of the outlawed former slave had simply vanished. McMillan and his posse of baffled whites checked the cabin of Applewhite. The only persons present were Applewhite's wife and children, and his wife's brother Forney Oxendine. The children told Sheriff McMillan that their father had been shot in the mouth by two bullets, but he had spit them out.

McMillan was furious. Applewhite's wife and her brother were of no help either. The posse followed the trail of blood left by Applewhite. After advancing into the swamps for a short distance, however, they turned back. They were afraid that the rest of the Lowry Gang were hiding in ambush, waiting for them.

Sheriff McMillan arrested Forney Oxendine and lodged him in the Lumberton jail. The jury of inquest charged him with being in charge of the outlawed Lowry Gang member's house. McMillan also contacted John Sinclair, the owner of the house Applewhite rented, and warned him that if he didn't evict the family within two days he would be arrested as an accomplice of the Lowry Gang.

A newspaper account reported on April 17, 1871 that George Applewhite had been killed at his home in Red Banks by some citizens. A few days later, however, the same newspaper reported that they were afraid the former slave was only severely wounded, not mortally. They feared that he had made good his escape into the swamp.

'Indeed, George Applewhite seemed to be the luckiest member of the Lowry Gang. It was also reported in the newspapers that he was killed at the Brandy Raid October 4, 1870. He had also been tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged for the murder of ex-sheriff Reuben King. He and Steve Lowry had appealed the conviction, however, and managed to escape before the case came to trial again.

It now seemed he had cheated death once again.

Nine days after the wounding of George Applewhite. Sheriff McMillan called out a small posse of nine whites to help him scour the swamps for the ever-elusive former slave who had simply vanished from the face of the earth. The date was April 26, 1871.

The posse was nearing Henry Berry's cabin located on the southern tip of Back Swamp near Asbury Church, when, to their amazement, they heard the distinctive sound of a banjo. Henry Berry's love for music was well known.

The small posse managed to make their way closer to the cabin. When they neared the clearing which surrounded the cabin, the posse spotted Boss Strong, armed with a double-barreled shotgun and a number of hand guns. Boss Strong was the armed guard stationed at the edge of the clearing to allow Henry Berry to visit with his wife and 3 children.

Not far from the cabin sat the wounded George Applewhite, propped against a rock enjoying the sun. The posse spotted Henry Berry inside entertaining his wife and children with the banjo.

A badly aimed shot was fired at the moving Boss Strong. Strong instantly flung himself to the ground and crawled around the cabin and into the door, bullets striking all about him. Applewhite quickly followed suit.

With total disregard to the three children -- one of whom was Henry Berry's 8-month old baby -- and the woman inside, the posse began riddling the cabin with shots. The occupants of the cabin returned the fire.

It soon became clear to McMillan that he could never hope to, flush the outlawed gang out of the cabin at the rate they were going. Neither side seemed to be gaining an edge. Quite naturally, decided McMillan, the side to emerge victorious would be the one whose friends arrived on the scene first. McMillan, was too well aware that he and his nine men were in Indian territory.

He took Frank McKay, an experienced Lowry hunter, and went in search of other recruits. He left the remaining eight whites behind to guard the cabin.

McMillan and McKay first stopped at Hugh G. Inman's farm. Inman, a white Republican farmer, was quite naturally none too happy when McMillan forced his two sons to go with him. The boys were Giles and Robert Inman.

After leaving Inman's, the small handful of whites made their way toward Buie's Store which was located where the present-day Pembroke Park stands (Buie's Store was located where the brick smoke stack used to stand). Here, another white recruit by the name of Thompson was also deputized. Another white was

also deputized from the Buie's Store/Red Banks area. The four inexperienced Lowry hunters were put in charge of the seasoned Frank McKay. McMillan ordered them to return to Henry Berry's cabin to help the eight whites left there to guard the cabin. The sheriff then caught the train at Red Banks and left for Shoe Heel (now Maxton) where he felt it would be easier to find recruits.

In a short time, McMillan had deputized approximately 15 whites. The posse left Shoe Heel en route to Henry Berry's cabin where they expected to find Henry Berry and his entourage still trapped. No doubt, McMillan was jubilant.

As McMillan and his new recruits neared Henry Berry's cabin, they were met on the road by the thirteen men who, supposedly, had Henry Berry and his entourage trapped in his cabin. The thirteen seemed to be in a state of shock; one of their number was dead and two were seriously wounded. They related an account of their nerve-wracking ordeal.

The eight men who had been left behind to guard the cabin continued pouring lead into the cabin. At about 11:30 firing ceased within the cabin. All was quiet. The eight were quite naturally perplexed. All three sides of the cabin with known exits were guarded; there was no way Henry Berry and his entourage could have escaped. The eight whites were further baffled when they heard the distinct sound of firing about a mile from the cabin, down in Back Swamp.

They checked the cabin. Their suspicions were confirmed; the cabin was empty.

Not believing their eyes and ears, the 8 whites struck out in the direction of the gun fire. About a mile down the road they found the seasoned Lowry hunter, Frank McKay crumpled by the roadside seriously wounded. Another deputized recruit was also seriously wounded. Giles Inman's lifeless and bloody body lay nearby. The ten remaining frightened and disorientated recruits gathered up their dead and wounded and headed in the opposite direction of Henry Berry's cabin. They were met by McMillan and his 15 new recruits. The whites' fighting spirit had been broken. They had entered Back Swamp the hunters; now it seemed they were the hunted. Wanting only to leave the inhospitable swamps, the posse dispersed until their composure could be regained.

How had Henry Berry Lowry managed to sneak the wounded Applewhite, Boss Strong, 3 children (one a 8-month old baby) and his wife out of the cabin right under the noses of the 8 armed and trigger-happy whites?

Shortly before the April 26th skirmish described above, a federal command (dispatched by the governor to Robeson County to quell the Lowry Uprising) had raided Henry Berry's cabin. The soldiers had found a trap door concealed in the floor of the cabin. The trap door afforded access to an underground tunnel that ran under the ground for some 60 yards and ended in the swamp. The tunnel was filled by the soldiers. McMillan was well aware of this fact.

What McMillan did not know was that a small closet next to the chimney concealed a secret door that led out of the cabin. McMillan had ordered the 3 sides of the cabin with known exits guarded: The south side was completely ignored. While the 8 recruits were concentrating their efforts upon the three sides with known exits, Henry Berry and his entourage simply entered the closet, opened the secret door and sneaked out of the cabin into the swamp.

Scuffletown had been alerted since 9:00 that morning about the gun fight at Henry Berry's cabin. Henry Berry was informed by way of the word-of-mouth grapevine that Frank McKay was en route to help the 8 whites who had the cabin guarded. Henry Berry knew the route the 5 new recruits would have to take to arrive at the cabin. He and Boss Strong set up blinds at the path that led into Back Swamp in the direction of Henry Berry's cabin and waited. Rhoda, the children and Applewhite were left a short ways from the site of the ambush.

Frank McKay and the 4 new recruits were rushing along, anxious to engage in the much-publicized fight at the cabin. Each, no doubt, was thinking how best to spend their share of the reward money. As they neared the path that led into Back Swamp, the 5 whites were greeted by a hail of gunfire. After the shooting, Giles Inman was dead. Frank McKay and another recruit seriously wounded. Taking advantage of the chaos created by the sneak attack. Henry Berry and Boss gathered up Applewhite. Rhoda and the children and made good their escape to the Devil's Den, the Lowry Gang's secret camp.

A few days later Henry Berry contacted Hugh Inman, the bereaved father of Giles Inman. He told Inman that he regretted having killed his son. The compassionate Indian explained, however, that the posse had raided his cabin with no consideration whatsoever for the safety of his three small children and wife. He assured Inman that he had only acted in self-defense.

After George Applewhite's wounds healed so that he could travel, he left the county. He went to Fayetteville where he worked for a time. He then reached Goldsboro where he remained for several months. While in Goldsboro he was recognized and arrested. He was again placed in the Whiteville jail, tried and acquitted under the Amnesty Act.

After the wounding of Applewhite by the eleven whites, six of whom were outlawed themselves, the Lowry Gang became more cautious. The agreement to remain in the swamps until the Lowry Gang was annihilated was continued, however, by George L. McKay, Frank McKay, J.D. McCallum, A.D. McCallum, F.M. Wishart, Malcolm McNeill, Archie McFadyen and Faulk J. Floyd, assisted occasionally by Sheriff Roderick McMillan and A.M. Mcbean.

As Mrs. Mary C. Norment relates in "The Lowrie History," however, "From sheer fatigue they became exhausted, and on the last day of June they came out of

Scuffletown, and the County Commissioners called out ten men in each Township to serve one week by turns, and placed the same men under command of F.M. Wishart," making his headquarters Buie's Store which was located in the center of Scuffletown.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Francis Marion Wishart's Diary

"We make a request that our wives who were arrested a few days ago, and placed in jail, be released to come home to their families by Monday morning -- and if not the bloodiest time will be here than ever was before. The life of every man will be in jeopardy. Henry B. Lowery (his mark), Stephen Lowery (his mark), Andrew Strong (his mark), Boss Strong (his mark)."

("An Unpublished Diary of Francis Marion Wishart")

On May 10, 1871, around midnight, Henry Berry, Steve, Boss and George Applewhite made their way to the Lumberton jail. By using augers, and other assorted tools, the Lowry Gang released Tom Lowry and Forney Oxendine from the county jail. Before the federal soldiers, stationed in Lumberton, could muster up some semblance of order within their ranks, Henry Berry and his men were back in Scuffletown.

At this point Henry Berry Lowry reigned supreme in Scuffletown. The federal soldiers sent to Lumberton by the governor (who had declared war on: the Lowrys) did not initiate any actions against the Lowry Gang. In fact, it was a widely publicized fact that the Lowry Gang members had been seen talking with a number of the federal soldiers on a number of occasions. In addition to this, when Judge Russell outlawed the nine young whites for murdering Bethea, the whites of the county refused to obey calls by the sheriff to form a posse with the intent to track down the Lowry Gang.

There was one young white man, however, who continued to fight the Lowry Gang with enthusiasm.

Francis (Frank) Marlon Wishart was born April 13, 1837, the third son of Eli and Mary Ann Strong Wishart. Eli Wishart at one time was commissioned a colonel and was placed in charge of the county militia. His son would soon serve in the same capacity.

In January, 1866 Frank Wishart married Lydia Pittman. In 1870 he opened a store in Shoeheel (Maxton).

In an introduction of sorts in "An Unpublished Diary of Col. Francis Marion Wishart," it is reported that "the writer (referring to the compiler of Wishart's notes) has never heard any reasonable explanation of the motives or reasoning that led his father to leave his business, undergo the hardships, and risk his life in the war against the Lowry Gang."

When the North Carolina legislators met in 1870- 1871, the legislature offered two thousand dollars for the capture of Henry Berry Lowry, “dead or alive.” It also offered one thousand dollars each for Stephen Lowry, Thomas Lowry; Boss Strong, Henderson Oxendine and George Applewhite. The following year, when the legislators met 1871-1872, the legislators raised the rewards to twelve thousand dollars for Henry Berry Lowry; six thousand for Stephen Lowry, Thomas Lowry, Boss Strong, Henderson Oxendine and George Applewhite; and five thousand for Andrew Strong who was a newcomer to the Lowry Gang. This could very well be Wishart's motivation to “undergo the hardships” inherent in going after the Lowry Gang.

It was decided by the county leaders that a force larger (and more military-like) than the local Police Guard was needed to quell the Henry Berry Lowry Uprising. Because of his experience in the Civil War, in which he attained the rank of a captain, Frank Wishart was persuaded by the county leaders to undertake command of the larger force. The governor of North Carolina commissioned Wishart a captain and gave him overall command of all efforts in Robeson County to capture the cunning Henry Berry Lowry and his notorious Lowry Gang. The ranks of the larger organization were filled by local men drafted by the county commissioners to serve fixed periods of time under Wishart's command.

Wishart's Diary reports: “Early entries in his diary show that he was inclined to use military language in his orders, and military methods in his maneuvers. There was no authority that could deal with failures. Wishart, now a Colonel by State appointment, had expected to have the full support that a military organization must have. Clearly, he did not get that support. Arms, ammunitions, rations, recruits, were either not available, or too slow in coming. Men 'drafted' by the commissioners were fearful, quite naturally, of being marked men and drawing down upon themselves the punishment the gang was so well able to mete out. Jungle warfare, for many, was intolerable; not even the hardiest could take it for more than two or three days. They would get lost; find themselves without food or water. Constantly they were fearful of what might be happening at home.

“So, we find that many men were willing to let others undertake the hazardous task of cleaning up the country. The diary discloses the general interest when State Authorities come down to assist in the prosecution of the war. Federal authorities too were concerned and sent in a company of 'Regulars,' many of whom looked upon the affair as they might have a local riot which was about to subside. Some soldiers, as did indeed some of the earlier county officials, fraternized with these criminals, and partook of their hospitality.” (This was undoubtedly written by Frank Wishart's son, William Clifton Wishart, Sr.).

The following excerpts are from Wishart's Diary.

“June 5, 1871: Left Lumberton at 9 o'clock. Met at Moss Neck. Headed for Tom Lowery's. Day broke when near William Powell's [maybe Purcells]. Got lost; no

pilot. Passed Ed Locklear who was chipping boxes. I laid down my arms and went to talk with him. Later he left his work and began to follow me. I captured him and made him pilot us to Tom Lowery's. Tom was at home, but ran out. I called to him to surrender, but he took his gun down and came to a ready. I fired at him and he ran; then the firing was heavy but he got away, supposed to be wounded. There were with me F.J. Floyd, Dan Currie, George McKay, Arch. McFadyen and Henry Biggs.

"June 6, 1871: The hunt continues. Got information as to where Hag W. stayed last night but she was nowhere to be found. Tried to learn if she stayed where she was supposed to have been--Ned C-----'s. On arriving at his field, sent three men to go around and come up in rear of his house. The men came upon him with a woman who was dressing his wounds. They had a quilt, blanket, sheet, and a chair in which he was propped up, but he rose and started off (still referring to Tom Lowry). Three shots were fired at him, but he escaped--for the second time. We picked up two pistols, his ammunition, and a bunch of all kinds of keys. We are all worn out -- no rations, so we give up the chase for the time and leave. While making our way out of the woods some others of the Lowery gang were following trying to ambush us, but we escaped.

"June 11, 1871: It is reported that Steve Lowery was at ----- Church and heavily armed. He talked freely, complaining that he was tired of the life he was leading. No one interfered with him. It is supposed that he was looking for a certain fellow (me) to kill him.

"June 12, 1871: The Company met, to start from Shoe Heel. Daybreak came upon us before we could get started. All of us took to the woods but three and we were discovered before night. Of the thirteen men we started out with, two of them were drunk by dark; one lost his boots; another, his pistol. Took a woods path but got lost again as our pilot was drunk too. We lay down for the night and tried to sleep but it was hot as hell. We struck a creek and began wading near D. McCormac's place, but a negro on the hill saw us. Went to a spring to guard it, and another negro came along to find us. The red bugs and yellow flies are terrible -- would kill an elephant. Came upon Melvin Lowery in the woods. He swore his name was Locklear, but questioned close he owned up that he was a son of Zion Lowery -- but he had a Lowery catechism by heart so perfectly that we could learn nothing from him. Thinking to have some fun, the men put him on the road with orders to run, and some high running he did, looking back at every jump, expecting no doubt to be shot.

"June 13, 1871: Henry Berry, Steve, and Boss Strong went to McKenzie's place where William McKay (colored) lived, took him out and gave him 100 lashes for telling on them. Lowery threatened that if he, William, ever said anything more they would surely kill him. Although the poor negro is in danger of his life he stays at his work.

“June 15, 1871: While a party of ten men was at Harper's Ferry Road, one half mile from Eureka, Henry Berry and Steve were at Eureka as bold as any judges could be.

“June 16, 1871: Three of the Lowery party went to Randal McNeill's last night, killed his dog and stole a bee hive. McNeill went out with his gun and seeing the men fired on them. They returned the fire and left, but took the honey with them.”

A few clarifying notes: It appears that, indeed, Wishart's job was frustrating. Each time he and his men entered the swamps they ended up being hunted themselves. It also should be noted that dogs warned owners of farms that Henry Berry and his men were on their premises. That is why they killed the watch dogs.

Wishart planned a massive July campaign against the Lowry Gang. He thought that with at least one hundred and fifty men, “they (the Lowry Gang) can be put out of the way in a few days. I mean men, not 16 year old boys. Boys will fight in an open field fight, but they lack discipline.”

Taking him at his word, the county commissioners called upon the militia companies of each of the fifteen townships to report with at least ten men. The following excerpts are for the July insertions in Wishart's Diary:

“July 2, 1871: [The Lowry Gang] Went to McKay's house; captured young son and an old man. Made them tell who the men were that had stopped Dr. McBryde and A.M. Watson. Henry Berry, Steve. Boss and one other was there. Mrs. McKay is ill, and Steve tried to comfort her. They met the people coming from church, but behaved very well. However, they threatened McKay and McCallum, ordering that they leave the county -- failing which their old folks would suffer the penalty. When this news came, a posse was gathered but darkness prevented pursuit.

“July 3, 1871: The gang met Mr. Mcl. on road about daylight. All seated themselves for a long talk. Henry Berry seemed to be quite reasonable in his arguments, but Steve made all kinds of wild threats. He said the Scotch were just damn fools and he was going to kill all of them. To him, there was no use hunting his gang. If the Governor or Sheriff wanted to order out men to fight, they would not have to hunt, for we, he said, will kill every one of them. All were heavily armed, each carrying more guns and pistols than any one man could use. Leaving the parley they took the road toward Dick Oxendine's.

“July 4, 1871: The County Commissioners ordered men out of each township to report at designated places. They were to have rations for seven days service. All but a very few failed to report, and some left after showing up at headquarters. Eight men were ordered to Bear Grass Landing, and to the Devil's Den near Red Banks. “

The following order also appears in "The Unpublished Diary of Francis Marion Wishart. "

"Shoe Heel, N.C. July 7, 1871. To the Commanders of Back Swamp, Sterling Mills, and Britts Townships:

Each of you will send a detail of two men to Buie's store, and repair with the rest to the following places:

Back Swamp to Cobbs Mill

Sterling Mills to a point above Dick Oxendine's store on the north side of the railroad near a little branch about three hundred yards from the R.R. and behind a small cornfield.

Britts, on the west side of Lumber River, near and in front of Angus Wilkinson's, right on the riverside.

Take a list of your men, which preserve, and should any disobey orders put him under arrest and hold him until you can send him to headquarters.

You will arrest and detain all persons who may come in contact with you unless they are known to be all right. In that event you will let them pass unmolested. Be very careful not to fire at anyone until you are certain who they are--as some detachments will be constantly moving about.

You will not allow any of our men to trouble any private property nor plunder any private house.

Try and post yourselves so as to be convenient to water and be sure to keep a good look out. Be as quiet as possible, talk as little as you can, and keep concealed.

F. M. WISHART who has been appointed by Sheriff McMillan to take charge of the whole body of County Troops."

Discipline was definitely a problem for Col. Wishart. An Indian maiden, Mary Catherine Oxendine filed a complaint about the manner in which she was treated by the Smith's Township detachment. In a sworn statement before Reverend Sinclair, she stated that her father's house was searched without a search warrant and that all the locks were ordered broken. Unable to find any Indian males on the farm, and no doubt thinking they were off with the Lowry Gang, Mary Catherine Oxendine became the recipient of the whites' rage. She testified

that one of the whites struck “her a violent blow on the side of the head with the stock of his gun.” (Quoted material from 'To Die Game' by W. McKee Evans.)

Col. Wishart was well aware of such barbaric actions by the men in the various township detachments. He endured such actions, no doubt, in hopes of forcing the Lowry Gang into an open confrontation with his men.

Another tactic he employed in hopes of provoking Henry Berry out into the open was arresting the outlawed Lowry Gang members' wives.

On July 10, 1871 Wishart ordered the wives of the outlawed men arrested. Wishart headed the Smith's Township. Among the prisoners captured July 10th by Wishart and the Smith's Township were the wives of both Henry Berry Lowry and George Applewhite. After taking the two Indian women prisoners, the detachment (which included 2 Indians) was headed east, traveling alongside the railroad track, toward headquarters at Buie's store (Which was located where the present-day town of Pembroke stands). When they were approximately 300 yards from headquarters they were fired upon by the Lowry Gang who had constructed a blind alongside the railroad track. Six men were hit; one died instantly, two others were seriously wounded and three others received superficial wounds. A cousin of Henry Berry's, James Lowry was one of the three who received minor wounds. He had been arrested by Wishart and the Smith's Township detachment and given the option of helping track down the Lowry Gang as an alternative to being arrested.

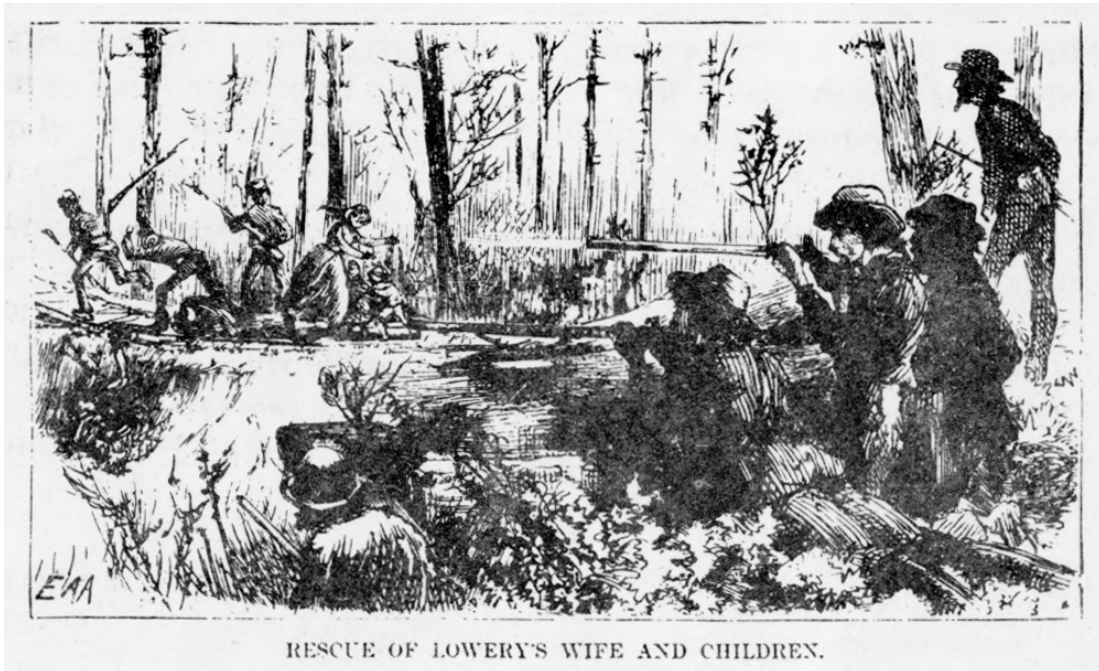
Realizing that Wishart was not going to attack their ambush. Henry Berry and his men left their ambush and rushed out upon the railroad tracks about three hundred yards further from Buie's store and began shouting and firing upon the men again with their long-range Spencer rifles. Still Wishart refused to be provoked by Henry Berry and his men; He realized that if he remained patient he would soon have over one hundred men at his disposal after all the detachments reported to headquarters. Therefore, Wishart ignored Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang and locked up Rhoda and George Applewhite's wife at headquarters.

Henry Berry became suspicious of Wishart's apparent disinterest. He correctly guessed that Wishart was waiting for all his men to report in before resuming the Lowry hunt. Henry Berry and his men left the railroad site and withdrew about one mile further to Harper's Ferry.

At Harper's Ferry the Lowry Gang constructed a raft made of logs piled one on top of the other at one end. When Wishart finally arrived with his men the Lowry Gang used this raft as a floating battery. There was no way Wishart and his men could cross the river without being picked off easily one by one, by the Lowry Gang. Realizing the seriousness of his predicament, Wishart ordered his men to return to headquarters at Buie's Store.

Unknown to Wishart, the Alfordsville and Thompson detachments had stopped for a short rest at Wire Grass Landing. The eighteen men arrived at Wire Grass Landing, which was located down the river from Harper's Ferry, after Wishart and his men had returned to headquarters. Captain Charles McRae was in charge: of the two detachments who had just returned from arresting Andrew Strong's wife, Flora Strong. Mrs. Strong had been turned over to another detachment passing on its way to headquarters. She had been taken to Buie's Store and locked up along with the other hostages.

As the eighteen men rested, they heard voices carrying over the water, coming from the direction of Harper's Ferry. Recognizing the splash of a paddle, they realized that a boat was approaching them from the direction of Harper's Ferry. Just before arriving at the bend in the river which kept the boat out of sight, the 18 men heard the sound of wading. They deduced that someone was leaving the boat. As the boat arrived at the bend in the river, it came into sight. It was occupied by a lone individual.



The men hid behind bushes and waited for the boat to come into range. As it came closer the lone individual in the boat was recognized as Henry Berry Lowry. As the boat came within range, the 18 men opened fire. Instantly, Henry Berry scurried over the side of the boat into the river. Retrieving his rifle from the bottom of the boat, Henry Berry tipped the boat slightly, using the edge of it as a shield from the bullets falling all about him. He began returning the fire. The 18 men were flabbergasted, however, to realize that instead of retreating, Henry Berry continued to advance upon their place of concealment.

Captain McRae and his men continued to pour lead into the river. Henry Berry continued to advance, using well-placed shots that were taking effect. Duncan McCormick and Charles Smith, two white members of the combined townships detachment, were wounded.



As Henry Berry continued to advance, McRae and his men lost heart. They gathered up their wounded and withdrew from Wire Grass Landing.

The prisoners were taken to Lumberton and placed in the Lumberton jail. Wishart hoped that Henry Berry would make an attempt to release them. This time, however, unlike the time in May when he broke Tom Lowry and Forney Oxendine out of the Lumberton jail, Wishart would have his men stationed nearby.

Wishart's diary records: "July 10, 1871: As ten of our men were on the road with Henry Berry's wife, Steve's wife, Make Locklear and George Dial as prisoners, they were ambushed within three hundred yards of our headquarters and fired upon. Archy McMillan was killed. Hector McNeill and Archy Brown were mortally wounded. Berry Barnes, Alex Brown, and James Lowry were also wounded. This fight was at Buie's store and the outlaws fired into the posse which held their wives, and then ran into the woods, coming out on the railroad, yelling and shooting with their long-range rifles. There was heavy shooting at the Bear Grass Landing fight. Sent B. McLean to Jack Oxendine's to bring in the Shoe Heel men. They reported promptly, and it is reported that eighteen men concealed themselves and shot at Henry Berry, Steve, Andrew and Boss. They returned the fire with all their guns then escaped down the creek. Here D. McCormick was wounded. I have arrested the wife of Henry Berry, Steve's wife, Andrew's wife,

and sent them to jail. The wives of Aaron Revels, George Applewhite, and Andrew McMillan were sent to jail too.”

Three days passed. All was quiet. Nothing was heard from Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang. On July 13, 1871 Wishart reported in his diary: “Detachment sent into swamp below Cobb's Mill. Found a Lowery camp on river bank. Train late. Can't tell what is up. All still and quiet. Have two men out -- Bill Jacobs and Jim Oxendine. to find the gang if they can.”

On July 14, 1871 Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang went to the residence of John McNair. They ordered him to write a letter for them. The letter reads (as found in “An Unpublished Diary of Francis Marion Wishart”):

“Robeson County, N.C. July 14, 1871. To the Sheriff of Robeson County and Col. Sinclair:

We make a request that our wives who were arrested a few days ago, and placed in jail, be released to come home to their families by Monday morning -- and if not the bloodiest time will be here than ever was before. The life of every man will be in jeopardy.

Henry B. Lowery (his mark), Stephen Lowery (his mark), Andrew Strong (his mark), Boss Strong (his mark).”

Mrs. Mary C. Norment relates in her book, “The Lowrie History”: “They then ordered Mr. McNair to hitch his horse to his buggy and proceed with it to Lumberton and deliver it (the letter) to James Sinclair, which Mr. McNair did, leaving no white person on the place except his wife (Mrs. McNair). Arriving at Lumberton about 10 o'clock a.m., Mr. McNair delivered the note to James Sinclair, who, after reading it directed him to hand it to the Sheriff, which he did, and after the Sheriff read it, he told Mr. McNair to inform the outlaws that the people of Robeson county were not to be tampered with in that way, and driven by mere threats into measures by these outlaws, and the white men in Robeson in all time to come branded cowards. Mr. McNair returned and met the outlaws about three miles below his residence, on the road to Lumberton, and delivered the message of the Sheriff to them, which they received with a dark, ominous scowl, but offered no violence to Mr. McNair.

“On Monday following, quite a number of the old grey-headed citizens of Robeson county went to Lumberton and held a consultation with the Sheriff and County Commissioners, and the conclusion arrived at was, that taking all things into consideration, it was probably best to release the wives of the outlaws and send them home...”

The meeting in Lumberton by the County Commissioners, and other county leaders, was held without notifying Col. Wishart, although he was in charge of all

“county troops.” While the county leaders were meeting in Lumberton, he was still out tracking the Lowry Gang.

In his diary he reports: “July 15, 1871: Reports from townships bad. Called out Smiths, Shoe Heel, Sterlings, Burnt Swamp, Mustered 32 men and 18 guns all told. Ordered to McKenzie's place. Frank and Jim Bethea were here today trying to buy big shot. I must think that they wanted them for the outlaws. Lowry and gang ate supper at Cobbs old house Saturday plotting to go somewhere, could not ascertain where. H. Cribbs put on a woman's dress to keep from coming when he was summoned; then was found in bed between two girls. He was made to get up, change his dress, and come anyway; He lives in Britt's.”

On July 17, 1871, early in the morning, Hugh McLean carried his sister to the home of Mr. M.C. McNair. They traveled in an open buggy. On his return trip home, his brother Murdoch A. McLean, and a friend, Archie D. McCallum, jumped up in the buggy with Hugh McLean. Instead of returning home, they decided to travel to Maxton and go on a Lowry hunting spree.

As the three young local whites -- all well-seasoned Lowry hunters -- arrived within approximately three hundred yards of the residence of Mrs. Margaret McLean, they heard the order: “Halt!” At almost precisely the same moment, supposedly, Henry Berry Lowry fired his gun from behind a blind. Murdoch A. McLean reached for his gun. Before he could aim it, however, he was riddled with buckshot. His brother Hugh was also mortally wounded.

The horse, frightened by the chaos and gunfire, galloped off. When the buggy was finally stopped, the two brothers were dead.

As mentioned, Archie D. McCallum was riding in the buggy, too. When the firing began, he jumped from the buggy and ran off through the woods. He had run but a short distance before he was shot in his leg. Nevertheless, he managed to reach Shoe Heel. When the white citizenry of the Scuffletown area learned of this double murder, they were terror-stricken.

Col. Francis Marion Wishart's Diary states:

“July 18, 1871: The men and women are moving out of Scuffletown to save their lives. Lowerys are still on the war path. Joe Prevatte is at George Dials with 16 men; O. Davis at Make Sanderson's with 16 men; H.L. Perry at McLaughlins with 28 men. Henry Berry's wife is released and sent up, on train, quite unbeknown to me. LETS GIVE UP TO HENRY BERRY LOWERY. FAREWELL ROBESON COUNTY.”

Wishart's Diary continues: “July 19, 1871: S. dispatch says that three outlaws are at Thos. McLean's. Jas. N. McLean with ten volunteers goes to this house. Send McNeill and ten men to Jack Oxendine's to try for George Applewhite. They were

discovered and had to return. Then sent them to Cobb's Mill and ordered them to stay there until Saturday. It astonishes me to see how men who ought to be good brave men are acting under this strange affair. If I had but twenty men who were MEN I'd be satisfied. But there is no discipline, and no chance to enforce any.

"July 20, 1871: Quiet. Men acting badly. Some leaving.

"July 21, 1871: Quiet. Went to Shoe Heel. Perry's command found gang near Steve Lowery's house. Heavy shooting but no damage.

"July 22, 1871: New lines forming. (List of townships. with men sent, some of whom are marked as having left, or deserted, evidently terror-stricken, and no fear for the results of deserting.)

"July 23, 1871: Jas. N. McLean's command lay in hiding near Make Sanderson's on a path leading to Andrew Strong's house, when Henry Berry's wife saw them and let out a long keen whistle supposedly as a signal to the outlaws who must have been nearby.

"July 24, 1871: B.M. Floyd came in Saturday; left this morning. Sent Evan Freeman, sick, off today by train. Capt. Mackley and eight men to Cobbs Mill.

"July 26, 1871: Lowery is reported to be on Broad Ridge at Elias's store. I want men. I send for Lowery's wife. She and Andrew's wife came. Claim they have not seen him since Friday. The wife agrees to poison Henry B. if I will find the poison."

Although Col. Francis Marion Wishart must have been a man of unquestionable courage, he appears to be pretty gullible. In practically every escape executed by the Lowry Gang evidence strongly suggests that Henry Berry's wife, Rhoda, played an important role. In Wishart's diary he reports on July 23, 1871 that "Henry Berry's wife saw them and let out a long keen whistle supposedly as a signal to the outlaws who must have been nearby." And now only three days later on July 26, 1871 he reports: "The wife agrees to poison Henry B. if I will find the poison. " No doubt, with Rhoda being free to enter and leave Wishart's headquarters at her leisure, Henry Berry knew most of Wishart's strategy before even Wishart's lieutenants did.

Wishart's diary continues: "July 28, 1871: Sent Wishart's Township men off; found R.R. Williams asleep on post, took his gun and put him under arrest. Gil McGirt returns. Governor Caldwell arrived in Lumberton today. Released Sam Barnes who has acted faithfully. Hear that George Applewhite is at Abby Combes. Henry Berry's wife comes to see me. She failed in what she promised to do. Had another shooting scrape at Cobbs Mill last night. Shot one of the L. gang. Capt. McElyea reported several guns fired.

"July 29, 1871: Leaving J.N. McLean in command, I go to Lumberton and was introduced to Governor Caldwell by Sheriff McMillan, conversed with him on the subject uppermost in all of our minds. But like all others he has a mind of his own. The militia is ordered out to report next Saturday, BUT it is ordered that all must be released on Tuesday for the election. I leave the seat of war today for the first time in three weeks. I shall go to Whiteville where I suppose my wife has taken refuge for her safety. Lowerys have made many inquiries as to her whereabouts. Arrived safely at Whiteville, finding family well and not too fearful.

" Notes: Governor Caldwell talked at length about the situation in Scuffletown. He regretted not meeting more of the citizens of the county. He says we must fight it out on the same line if it takes all the year. We hear that Lowerys are back at Joe Johnsons across Back Swamp. Steve is said to be sick. Tom is at home and George Applewhite is at Jack Oxendine (his father-in-law's). But I could not get any men to go with me: It's hard but true. When men refuse to do anything but talk, and ask only that they be let alone, what can one man do? My God! if I only had the power I would discipline them and make them move.

"C.H. Gilbert and J.H. Denby, young men of Wilmington, have been of great help, never complaining about any duty assigned to them, but always ready and willing to stick it out to the last. There are a FEW OF US who are determined never to SURRENDER this County to Henry Berry Lowery."



Wishart's Diary records the following for the month of August 1871:

"August 1, 1871: From Whiteville, via Wilmington, to Buie's store, and then to Shoe Heel.

"August 2, 1871: Shipped guns, ammunition, and canteens to Lumberton. These have volunteered for Thursday: Frank Marden, Sam Barnes, W.S. Dillon, Arch. McFadyen, John S. McNeill, Dan McKenzie, Doug McCallum, F.M. Wishart, J.N. Mclean, Make McNeill, Gil McGirt, Jas. McQueen, Ja. McBryde, Frank McKay. We evacuated Scuffletown, so all could vote. Had rations cooked up. Left Shoe Heel about 9 o'clock, down the railroad, and off through the woods bay near Mr. Wilkinson's; through the creek swamp, forded the creek. McGirt and McKenzie left us, travelled late; arrived at Smith School House and spent the night there, putting out pickets. Old Mr. Jackson came along, said he was going to Lumberton to vote. Had a small bag of rations, but the poor fellow had lost his vote this time if that was his errand. We are all tired and worn out; seems a fruitless job trying to take these outlaws. We are right here because we think they may try to capture some one today. We are in Long Swamp -- a bad place.

"Aug. 3, 1871: in Long Swamp: Big guns heard from the direction of Scuffletown. Command divided so that they can go to Shoe Heel to vote. Dr. Smith was shot near his mill. We went to William Saunders to look for Murdock Locklear. Not here. Two mulattoes reported shot by two negroes while returning from election. Dr. Smith reported bad off. Fifteen yankee soldiers came to Lumberton under Lieut. Simpson.

"August 5, 1871: Militia ordered to Lumberton. I went down and beheld a pretty sight. Negroes, mulattoes, whites, all drunk. They had no arms, no ammunition, nor anything except just money enough to buy whiskey. Disgusted I leave for Whiteville, where I'll remain until family gets better.

"Aug. 6, 1871: In Whiteville. Nothing from seat of war.

"Aug. 7, 1871: Quiet; no news from B.A. Howell's militia.

"Aug. 8, 1871: My wife gave birth to another son at 3 o'clock this morning. Day passes quietly; worried to have to stay away from duty.

"Aug. 9, 1871: Left with Alex. Barnes for Brown Marsh. Rumored that Henry Berry had crossed the Cape Fear. B. A. Howell's militia reported to be disbanded on Monday.

"Aug. 10, 1871: Lowry's at Moss Neck on 8th. Talked for two hours. Henry Johnson, alias Revels, found dead near Floral College yesterday. Today the body had disappeared. Great excitement. Lowrys were at canal below Drake's place last night. A.I. Thompson says he talked with them."

It appears that Henry Berry Lowry was trying everything in his power to reach some type of peace agreement. Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang went to the home of John McNair who had written the letter to Sheriff McMillan ordering that

the outlaws' wives be freed. Henry Berry told McNair that he would not bother anyone in Robeson County if they left him alone. He requested that, McNair notify Sheriff McMillan and Sinclair in Lumberton of this fact.

In Wishart's diary he reports: "August 13, 1871: Returned from Wadesboro. J.N. Mclean came in to see me. Lowery went to Bridges to get his petition written."

In "To Die Game" by W. McKee Evans, he had this to say concerning this petition: "The following day (the day after Henry Berry told John McNair he would not bother anyone else in Robeson County if they would leave him alone) they visited other plantations, where they made essentially the same proposals, having breakfast at the McRackens' and lunch at the Pattersons'. During the afternoon they appeared at the home of James D. Bridgers. Several of the neighbors were collected together assisting Mr. Bridgers in a job of working. Here they (the Lowry Gang) remained for a considerable time discussing the situation, and giving their views... They expressed themselves as tired of their present mode of life, and anxious to return to the duties and peaceful pursuits of good citizens, if they could do so safely. They proposed if the citizens would unite in a petition to the governor and procure for them a pardon..., they would leave the state within three days, never to return; but unless this was done they would remain, and expressed full confidence of being able to maintain themselves for ten years."

Wishart's diary continues:

"Aug. 14, 1871: Quiet. Lowerys at McKenzies;

"Aug. 15, 1871: Convention at Lumberton aiming to put the county under martial law, petitioning for troops to act with sheriff's posses. Lowerys to be at Eliza Cummings' today. J.W. Plummer assaulted O.S. Hays at Red Banks. Knocked him off train. I arrested Plummer. Trial tomorrow morning.

"Aug. 16, 1871: To Red Banks for Plummer-Hays trial. P. bound over to court. Bad news by Gil McGirt. Tells that writs are out for all, and that he was arrested. All uneasy. J.N. McLean has not returned. Frank Marden went down Monday, to return next day, and has not come yet.

"Aug. 17, 1871: Received letter saying my wife is very sick. Must go.

"August 18, 1871: Started today, but could not leave; Lowerys reported to be back of Berry Thompson's; was seen by Josh Barnes. I came to Lumberton and met the Adjutant General of the State, introduced by B.A. Howell. He appointed me Colonel of the 59th Regiment, and gave orders that fifty volunteers should be called at once. Rod McMillan and I went to Sterling Mills, borrowed a mule and buggy from Strong Wishart and drove all night in the rain. Lowerys seen today at David Townsends. Took Tim Daily to Wilmington and turned him over to U.S.

Marshal, who put him in jail and took the papers so he could collect. I saw Pop, Calvin and William Goins in Wilmington jail -- all well and hearty. Left on 7 o'clock train for Whiteville, where I find all well but my wife, who is very sick.

"Aug. 19, 1871: Rained all day. Riot at Whiteville depot among negroes.

"Aug. 20, 1871: Sunday. Whiteville. Bob Wishart came down to see Lydia.

"Aug. 21, 1871: Bob left. I should go back to Scuffletown, but Lydia is so bad off I can't leave her.

"Aug. 22, 1871: Will stay over today. Mrs. Pitman [his wife's mother] came and brought Reily. [Reil Wishart was eldest son of Col. F.M.]

"Aug. 23, 1871: Lydia some better.

"Aug. 24, 1871: Went to depot at 2 o'clock. Train came along. I signed it down but the thing failed to stop. I have a good notion to shoot that ---- engineer. Returned to Whiteville, got horse and buggy to drive over to the other railroad, but when within two miles of it - the train went by. Returned to Whiteville.

"Aug. 25, 1871: Train for Wilmington; arrived there. Met General Gorman, Col. Mendenhall, and Capt. Egan with some fifty United States Troops bound for Scuffletown. Our own volunteers are scarce. Col. J.N. McLean has 25 men rank and file at Eureka. Report from Lumberton says there are no men and no rations. I say God forbid that Robeson County should be sunk.

"Augudt 27, 1871: Sunday. I had an interview with an emissary from Henry Berry L. on terms of peace. Proposed that I should meet him unarmed and talk about affairs in general. I hope to accomplish his removal from this place. He was seen talking with two of the U.S. soldiers within 300 yards of their camp, he and Andrew Strong together. I got Tom Sanderson to go to Lumberton with a letter to Rod McMillan; he returned all right. The Lowery wives were in camp today, passing back and forth. Lowery too will go some day perhaps.

"Aug. 28, 1871: Heard from H.B.L. today, very anxious to meet me to talk over terms of peace. TOMORROW I AM TO MEET THEM. Duff Cummings is to pilot me. Must I go or not? I WILL GO EVEN IF I AM TO BE KILLED.

"Men are slow to come in. What must I do? Am in awkward position. Will do all that I can to bring peace to this country. If I can only succeed I wilt be satisfied. Gen. Gorman went to Lumberton for men.

"Aug. 29, 1871: Duff came early this morning, woke me, said all was ready. I started. But must I go or not? I will go. Went through the woods and up the railroad to a culvert in the big bay below Red Banks. Henry Berry, Steve, Boss,

and (illegible) were seated on the road fully armed. Talked with them. They said they were willing to meet any emergence so as to escape. I returned to ask the Adj. Gorman to see them. I am wet through and understand that J. N. McLean came in this morning.

“Aug. 30, 1871: Quiet. Gang reported at Alfred Smith's potato patch last night. Sent Marden with 11 men, but nothing done.”

The adjutant general of the state, Adjutant General Gorman was spending five weeks in Robeson County in hopes of solving the Lowry Gang problem once and for all. Col. Wishart arranged a meeting between Gorman and the Lowry Gang. The meeting was slated for September 7, 1871.

Colonel Wishart notes in his diary: “Sept. 7, 1871: Raining. Let off several men today to return to duty on Sunday. Returned to camp. Make McNeill, Jim Donoho McQueen, Jim McBryde and McGirt report. sent Jim McB. to serve summons. It is so rainy that Lowery [Henry Berry] failed to show up. Gen. Gorman went a few minutes after I left and met the whole gang. He stayed with them all day, and went to where they had their cooking done -- at Riley Oxendine's. I sent a pint of brandy to them by Duff and they were glad to get it. Henry Berry went off alone and got 3 quarts more. While fifteen of our men were passing him, Henry Berry squatted and let them go by, then ran to tell the others in his party. They began getting their fire arms ready, but Steve took advantage of the confusion, and ran to the oven, stole out the hot biscuits and stored them in his own haversack. Gen. Gorman examined all their arms, ammunition, etc. At a late hour they all parted and the General went over to old Lady Lowerys' and after getting lost in the dark and rain he spent the night there. Many inquiries were made about me; they said they were anxious to meet me again. The party broke up to meet again in Florence, S.C.”

When Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang's wives were arrested July 10, 1871 by Col. Wishart in hopes of causing Henry Berry to make another raid on the jail, the county leaders met, without inviting or notifying Col. Wishart, and decided it in the county's best interest to release the wives of the outlawed gang. Now it appears that another major decision was being considered concerning the Lowry Gang without consulting Col. Wishart.

The county leaders were seriously considering Henry Berry's proposal for the citizens to “...unite in a petition to the governor and procure for them a pardon...” Before malting a final decision, however, Gorman was visiting “...nearly every house in the outlaw domain, and took special pains to inform myself as to the feelings and expressed opinions of the people.”

Gorman described his meeting with the Lowry Gang (“To Die Game” by W. McKee Evans): “It was possible that they would meet me, and ... without informing any but Col. Wishart of my intention, I proceeded thither, unarmed

except with a repeater ... When I first saw them they were sitting on a log awaiting my promised presence. They were all heavily armed, Henry Berry ... with a Spencer rifle, and a double barrelled gun, while within his belt were five repeaters. The balance of the gang had two double-barrelled guns, and three to five repeaters. All of them, I believe, also carried a bowie knife ... They were exceedingly respectful to me during the interview, and stated that their object in wishing a conference was to know if it was possible for me to grant them some terms. They ... stated that if they were allowed, they would depart from the territory of the United States ... Some of the crimes alleged against them, they denied, and complained that from the first, they had acted on the defensive.

“Before leaving them, they assured me that they would not ambush or shoot any of the troops under my command, except they should be 'cornered,' in which event they intended to die game. They also promised that they would not physically injure any citizen except in defense of themselves, but said they were bound to eat, and as they were not allowed to work, they would be forced to make requisitions upon the farmers for supplies ...

“For desperadoes and murderers, which they undoubtedly are, they bear but little resemblance.”

Col. Wishart's diary continues:

“Sept. 8, 1871: had to go to Lumberton with McGirt, McQueen, and McNeil about the killing of Henry Revels. They were bound over to Court. J.L. McLeod, James McBryde, and Berry Godwin went bail for them. All of 58 men were ordered out by Colonel Hornel (?) through a mistake. What a hell of a mess -- some going one way, some another. We return to camp on the freight train. Rumored that Gen. Gorman is captured.”

As noted, Gorman met the Lowry Gang Sept. 7, 1871. Gorman had spent the night at Mary Cumba Lowry's. This is probably why Wishart reported the next day that it was “Rumored that Gen. Gorman is captured.”

Wishart's diary continues: “Sept. 9, 1871: Saturday, and today I am going down to Antioch to see my family. Everybody is going to Scuffletown. Sheriff McMillan took Wm. Goins to penitentiary for three years term -- Pop Oxendine to jail, also John Brun (?) and Rite Leitch to same place.

“Sept. 10, 1871: Sunday at Mr. Pitmans. The 58th Regiment is ordered to Headquarters, today by Col. Howell. A foolish order. Gen. Gorman went to Shoe Heel yesterday, and some of the militia reported.

“Sept. 11, 1871: Back to Hdqrs. Nothing being done. No rations. Howell has confused the men as much as he can -- some are running away. I must go to Lumberton for rations. Mr. Godwin supplied them, and I gave Turner \$200 to

bring them to camp where the cooks were ordered to get busy. Gave Howell order to skirmish the far side of the creek and Col. Mclean this side. Col. Mclean reports that Howell failed to come out, he stays in camp and asks McL to send a man to take over -- gets more contrary all the time. I waited until Tuesday, but no Howell.

"Sept. 12, 1871: Townsend skirmish line at Sampson school house. Lieut. Humphrey and 35 men on right; Col. Mclean and 26 men on left. Moved by ford through swamp; posted squads at strategic points; they took three prisoners, turned them aloose. George Lowry, James Lowery, Bryant Oxendine. Lt. Humphrey's men went for water, were lost all night. Returned to camp next morning. Hear that Gen. Gorman has run some of the mulattoes off.

"Sept. 14, 1871: In Camp. Sick. The Thompson and Alfordsville men after making a great fuss about rations are found to have plenty of bacon. Such men ought not to live. They had rations, but wanted any excuse to go home. Gen. Gorman met outlaws yesterday at Devil's den. Declined offered terms for peace.

"Sept. 15, 1871: Still sick but another raid on hand. At 9 o'clock at night Gen. Gorman and I, with Lt. H. and two men went to Henry Berry's house. Then started back along side of swamp but got lost again, and lay down for the night back of Steve's home and Oh, God! was there ever such another place. At daybreak I crossed the swamp and waited on a path until the evening when I went on over to where Gen. Gorman wanted to go."

"Sept. 16, 1871: Raining. Camped on edge of Back Swamp. Gen. Gorman and a sergeant go for drinking water, but get lost. Our supplies are all out.

"Sept. 17, 1871: Took a path leading to Elias Jones' where we got water and had some meat cooked. Jones gave us some fresh pork, but it was bad. His house is a 10 x 12 of pine boards, dirt floor, but he has a wife, seven children, four dogs, a gun and but one chair; no cups or dishes. Got a canoe and took the river for camp. Hard rain and no sign of any Lowerys. Am very tired. Hope to hear of him soon -- am told he wants to see me too very badly. Henry Berry Lowery says that he did kill James P. Barnes, and knew nothing about the McLeod murders. He admitted killing the Mclean brothers, and John Taylor. Did not know who Arch McCallum was, he said.

"Sept. 18, 1871: Sunday in camp. Nothing new. Lowery gang reported to have gone to Church at Union Chapel. Gen. Gorman left today. He thought we had Henry Berry, but we failed. Jim McBryde with five soldiers went to Back Swamp. Joe Phillips and five citizens went to Tom Lowerys.

"Sept. 19, 1871: James McBryde and crew killed seven dogs. Frank Marden with five citizens go back to Tom Lowerys. Williams went to Back Swamp with five soldiers. I go to Shoe Heel.

"Sept. 20, 1871: James McBryde comes in. Steve Lowery reported at E. Jones' last Friday. J.N. Mclean and his squad started over creek. Jas. Donoho McQueen drew his gun on Frank Marden at McNeill's dam, and broke up the hunt. Lowery is said to have had his dinner at Archy McNeill's yesterday.

"Sept. 21, 1871: Quiet. Marden squad came in. Nothing to report.

"Sept. 22, 1871: A.G. McGirt leaves. Jas. McQueen leaves. Lowery is at Back Swamp says Sgt. Trumbull (?).

Sept. 23, 1871: -All gone but three of us, I, Sam Barnes, and Marden. I am going to Pat Lowery's.

"Sept. 25, 1871: Looking for Gen. Gorman. Frank Marden left for other parts, but came back late at night with Dick Gregory.

"Sept. 26, 1871: Gorman came back with more troops. Scouting parties return with no news. Marden says that H.B.L. and his whole gang are to eat dinner at H.B.L. 's house today. All a lie. Hugh Johnson here today. Heavy storm.

"Sept. 27, 1871: Left camp for home. One week ago Lowery's went to Jos. Thompson and got 50 lbs. bacon. They had followed Dick Williams and U.S. troops until they turned back near Joe T's; then they went in and demanded bacon and tobacco and got them. Lowerys were at Riley Oxendines yesterday.

"Sept. 29, 1871: At Shoe Heel. Saw Dr. McBryde.

"Sept. 30, 1871: Steve Locklear was killed tonight by one Thos. Brady. Brady was arrested.

"Oct. 1, 1871: At M.S. McLean's Masonic funeral; then to Hdqtrs. on pole car with Gen. Gorman and Col. Mendenhall. Preston Chavis saw Lowery this day between this place and Prospect Church.

"Oct. 2, 1871: Took Thos. Brady to County jail. Lowery gang passed by Make Locklear's today. Gen. Gorman left for Raleigh.

"Oct. 3, 1871: To Hdqrs. with Floyd in buggy. Nothing doing. (a barely legible note says something about a petition being offered for Capt. Lowery.)

"Oct. 4, 187 1: In camp and disgusted.

" Oct. 7, 1871: Left Scuffletown for good and for eternity. List of those left: F .M. Wishart, J.N. Mclean, Jas. McBryde, Jas. McQueen, Dan McKenzie, Sam Barnes. That's all. Total. No go for me.

“Oct. 9, 1871: Leut. Harris with 63 U.S. soldiers left Scuffletown. The Lowerys are still at large. No hope of getting them. So far Lowery is successful. I shall rest for a few days.”

The “barely legible note...” saying something about a petition was probably in reference to the petition Henry Berry asked James D. Bridgers to write for them on August 13, 1871. It appears that there was a goodly number of whites in the county who were willing to sign a petition to pardon Henry Berry Lowry and the Lowry Gang if that was the only way of ridding the county of them. This was not the only time a petition was circulated on behalf of the Lowry Gang.

In the fall of 1870, shortly after his brother Owen C. Norment was allegedly murdered by the Lowry Gang, Dr. Richard M. Norment proposed the following plan: “petition the governor to issue a proclamation offering pardon and protection to those outlaws on condition that they within a prescribed time come in and take an oath to support the laws and abstain from further depredations.” Although Norment's petition failed, after six months of Norment scouring the county for signatures, it appears that the idea did not.

Boss, Andrew and Rhoda Strong's father was John Strong. Allegedly, he killed a man in Fayetteville and moved to Robeson County to elude the authorities. His last name was Gorman before killing the man in Fayetteville. When he moved to Robeson County he allegedly changed his last name from Gorman to Strong. Therefore, Rhoda's, Andrew's and Boss' last name was Gorman. This bit of information explains why Adjutant Gen. Gorman was on such friendly terms with the Lowrys, especially Henry Berry's mother Mary Cumba Lowry. As Wishart made mention of in his diary, Gen. Gorman spent the night at the old Allen Lowry homestead on at least one occasion. Evidence strongly suggests that Gen. Gorman was related to Rhoda, Andrew and Boss.

It was believed by many that Gen. Gorman went back to Raleigh to try and win support for the petition to pardon Henry Berry in Raleigh. Although Governor Caldwell was a Republican, as was Gen. Gorman, there was a Conservative majority in the legislature. And believe it or not, resentment and bitterness still smoldered in the bosoms of Conservatives even in 1871.

Col. Wishart's diary continues: “Note: It is a fact that on the night that Lowerys captured J.C. Sanders, Make McNeill, Oakley McNeill, and others were hunting. Oakley McNeill and Lowery went to a dog that had treed a possum, and Henry B. went up the tree and shook the possum out. McNeill then moved the outlaw's gun from where it was While Lowery was up the tree . Another very good opportunity thus was lost.”

It should be noted that on October 15, 1871 the last of the federal soldiers left Robeson County.

Wishart's diary continues:

"Oct. 16, 1871: It is true that Henry Berry walked up to Moss Neck this morning with a raccoon which he gave to Oakley McNeill, saying that he was entitled to it, as his dog had treed it. He then walked away in the presence of Smith, McNeill, Kelly and others. H.B.L. was alone. Only Saturday John McNair reported that they were gone. Now they wanted to borrow Oakley's dog to hunt with. Oakley told them he would not let him have this one, but he had one at home which they could use.

"Oct. 17, 1871: Frank Marden returns with one more man to hunt the Lowery gang. Andrew Strong was seen on Sunday at Hdqrs. Said he was worn out.

"Oct. 19, 1871: Henry B. L was at Pipkins (?) today and cussing out Gen. Gorman in a terrible way. L. says he is going to leave as soon as the weather is cooler.

"Oct. 27, 1871: Henry spent the day at his home. His wife sold some hogs to T. Bullard for \$7.00. Henry B. sat in the bushes during the sale.

"Oct. 29, 1871: Henry B., Steve, Andrew and Boss attended a public speaking at Bear Swamp today on educational topics. All had two double barreled guns for each. They captured old Jas. Sinclair, J.P., who had outlawed them, and all had a big time dancing to banjo picking, and all parted peacefully.

"Nov. 4, 1871: H.B. and Tom Lowery were at Moss Neck from 2 P.M. to midnight. All hands drunk and fighting. H.B. knocked several down with his gun. Mr. Northcutt, engineer, walked over to take a drink, and was asked if he was not afraid of H.B. Lowery. Northcutt answered, "No, Damn Henry Berry" and at the same time he was standing beside this Henry Berry. Henry Berry says "I am the man they are after." Rowdying until midnight, they all went off in Jess Oxendine's wagon. Tom went off on Northcutt's engine and threatened to put him off. (This was presumably a railroad engine. W.C.W.)

"Nov. 6, 1871: Henry Berry attended a corn husking at W. Powell's. Put Mose Jacobs at the door as guard until he ate. He helped shuck the corn and put away the shucks.

"Dec. 9, 1871: Henry B. and Steve at Moss Neck. Rode train to Red Banks. Steve asked Mr. Paul, proprietor of store how many fine guns he had for him to break in. After looking at them, he handed them back saying that he did not want any.

"Dec. 11, 1871: H.B.L. and Andrew Strong visit Capt. J. W. Plummer looking for overcoats, and to talk with him about his house being robbed. They claimed it

was the gang and Boss that robbed him, and that they knew nothing about it. Plummer shut the doors on them. They made him open the door and asked him about doing his duty. They agreed that he had. Upon leaving they met Mr. B. Sanderson who had an old gun. Their order to halt was obeyed. H. B. being ready with his gun. Sanderson came to an order arms. H. B. walked over to him, asked several questions and wanted to know why he carried such a gun. Sanderson said to shoot game. Lowery inspected the gun closely, told him he might kill a fox or so, handed it back and told him goodbye, and they parted.

"Feb. 11, 1872: From Dec. 15 up to this day the gang could be seen anywhere at most any time. Rewards offered for them now being raised to \$10,000.00 some men show an interest in going after them. About Feb. 8th, James McQueen, alias Donoho, made his way to Dick Oxendine's and fixed up a blind, but he was discovered by Mag. Locklear and reported to Henry B. who was near by. A race was soon on, McQueen winning. Boss and Andrew met Frank Marden near Moss Neck -- so he says."



OWEN C. NORMENT'S TOMBSTONE. Owen C. Norment was head of the county militia. His wife, Mary C. Norment was allegedly the author of 'The Lowrie History.' Note the Inscription underneath the date of his death: "Murdered by the Lowry Gang."

CHAPTER NINE

State Legislators Increase Bounty on Heads Of Lowry Gang Members Lowry Gang Robs Pope & McLeod Store Boss Strong Allegedly Murdered

“...I kept watching until Boss laid down on the floor with his feet to the fire and his head towards me, and commenced playing on a mouth harp; then I saw my chance, and I pushed my rifle (a Henry) through the cat-hole until it was not over three feet from his head, and took a steady aim by the light and shot...”

(“The Lowrie History,” by Mary C. Norment)

James “Donahoe” McQueen was the illegitimate son of a Scottish father and an Indian mother, therefore he was well versed on the ways and habits of the Lowry Gang. He was slender in build and possessed rather peculiar ways. Those acquainted with him remembered him as being wild and rambunctious. He was very agile and quick in movement; determined and strong-willed.

When he turned 21, McQueen left the home of Mr. Donahoe in Richmond County, N. C., who had raised him since an infant. He worked for a time in S.C. After saving his wages the determined “half-breed” purchased a double-barreled shotgun and ammunition and set out for Robeson County. He had heard the many tales concerning the famous Lowry Gang; he had also heard about the huge rewards for the gang -- dead or alive -- and his intention was to get rich quick.

When he arrived in Scuffletown, McQueen went from home to home under the pretense of looking for a suitable tract of land to buy in the area. The young Scotchman (he did not claim his Indian mother) traveled throughout the area, becoming well acquainted with the many foot paths and by-ways interspersed throughout the many dense swamps interspersed throughout the Scuffletown area. He joined in every posse that was organizing to hunt down the Lowry Gang. Although these posses failed, McQueen became better acquainted with the swamps. He also learned who he could trust and who he could not trust.

After many months of better acquainting himself with the Lowry Gang's stomping grounds, McQueen began going into the swamps alone at night. He would hide himself from view, practicing building blinds. He waited patiently to get a glimpse

of the Lowry Gang members. After countless weeks of this type of surveillance, the sly "half-breed" learned to distinguish one member from the other.

On February 8, 1872 McQueen made his way to Dick Oxendine's place and prepared a blind. He was discovered by Mag Locklear, who in turn informed Henry Berry Lowry who happened to be nearby. Henry Berry arrived but was spotted by McQueen. The bounty hunter leaped from behind the bushes and raced away with the fearless Indian leader hot on his heels. McQueen managed to escape, however, but not before being engaged in the run of his life -- or for his life.

About this time, the state legislators gave Henry Berry their answer to his petition which was sponsored in Raleigh by Adjutant General Gorman. The legislators raised the bounty on Henry Berry Lowry's head to \$12,000, dead or alive: The rewards for Tom and Steve Lowry, Boss Strong and George Applewhite were increased to \$6,000 each, dead or alive. Andrew Strong was worth only \$5,000 because he was a relatively new member of the Lowry Gang.

Henry Berry was disappointed, to say the least, when his peace negotiations fell through. The Lowry Gang had been pretty inactive for the past six months waiting to see what the state legislators would do.

Knowing that he could be assured of increased pursuit as a result of the increased bounties, Henry Berry began making preparations to leave the county. If one recalls, Wishart's diary states: "Oct. 19, 1871: Henry B. L. at Pipkins (?) today and cussing out Gen. Gorman in a terrible way. L. says he is going to leave as soon as the weather is cooler." Henry Berry told the remaining members he was leaving and invited them to come along. They refused. He then predicted that they would all be dead within 2 years if they remained in the county.

In days past, the Lowry Gang carried out small raids in Robeson County. The gang would only take what was needed to sustain them while they were forced to hide out in the swamps. All other booty was usually shared with the poor. For this reason, Henry Berry realized that in order to successfully leave the county, a great change in tactics would have to occur. In order to leave the county, a great deal of money would be needed; money to take the trip and money to help him begin a new life. He would have to make one big hit. The most logical place to hit it big would be in Lumberton, the county seat. Also, Lumberton did not have a regular bank; most of the townspeople's' money was kept in the iron safe of two prominent white businessmen, Pope and McLeod who ran a very successful merchantile store. Although the other Lowry Gang members refused to leave the county with him, they agreed to help him rob the Pope & McLeod store in Lumberton.

The only problem was that it would be necessary to have someone who could move about freely in Lumberton to work out the details of the robbery. The man

Henry Berry decided on was Frank Marden. Marden had gained the respect of the Lumberton townspeople by serving as hangman when Henderson Oxendine was hanged.

At the time when Henry Berry decided Marden was their man, Marden was out with the Wishart company in search of Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang. Henry Berry was fairly certain, nonetheless, that Marden could be persuaded to work for them. He was nothing but a two-bit drifter, drifting from town to town looking for an easy dollar. By agreeing to give him a share, Henry Berry was certain they could persuade him to cooperate.

Wishart's diary states: "February 11, 1872: ...Boss and Andrew met Frank Marden near Moss Neck -- so he says." "February 13, 1872: Gang at Moss Neck again after Marden. Like all other cowards, he crouched under a seat to hide. Boss and Andrew picking their banjos; all drunk."

Frank Marden's primary role in the Pope & McLeod robbery involved securing a key to the prospering merchantile store. The fact that a key fitting the front door of the Pope & McLeod store was found in Tom Lowry's pockets when he was later killed, attests to the fact that Marden was successful.

Although discrepancies exist as to the exact date of the robbery, the actual date was probably February 16, 1872.

On February 16, 1872, the Lowry Gang, led by Henry Berry, robbed the stables of A. W. Fuller, in Lumberton, of a horse and wagon. By means of a key, acquired by Frank Marden, the Lowry Gang entered the front door of the store of Pope & McLeod; they locked the front door back and exited through the back door. The take included dry goods, clothing, boots, shoes, guns and a safe. The gang loaded their booty on the wagon. They then entered the blacksmith shop of T.B. Newberry and stole tools for the purpose of opening the safe.

No doubt, in an attempt to show the county their contempt at being denied their pardons, the Lowry Gang made their way to the courthouse. They entered Sheriff McMillan's office and took his iron safe also. The safe was loaded, along with that of Pope & McLeod's, on the wagon. Finding the load to be too heavy for the horse, the sheriff's safe was broken open on a back street in Lumberton. \$6,000 was found within. The emptied safe was left on the street.

The Pope & McLeod safe was taken a distance of about three miles to May's Mill and broken open. \$22,000 was found within, along with some important papers and books pertaining to the firm of Pope & McLeod. The gang, leaving the safe behind, made their way to Tom Lowry's house. They readied their firearms in case of attack by a posse; none was forthcoming, however.

It appears that a party of citizens had organized as a posse the next morning when they realized their losses and had followed the wagon tracks leading to Scuffletown. After traveling about a mile and a half, the posse met up with Mr. Pope and Mr. McLeod. The two owners of the store had given chase after missing the safe upon reporting to their office that morning. After consulting with the whole party, Mr. Pope & Mr. McLeod included, the posse decided that further pursuit was useless. They returned to Lumberton. In other words, the fair white citizens of Lumberton realized that the tracks were leading to Scuffletown. They returned to Lumberton to sulk over their losses.

After the Pope & McLeod robbery, no white man ever saw Henry Berry Lowry again ... not as he normally appeared, anyhow.

“On February 21, 1872, Governor Caldwell issued a proclamation stating the rewards (the increased rewards on the Lowry Gang's heads) and exhorting the citizens of the state to do all in their power to bring the outlaws to justice.” (“The Lowrie Gang: An Episode in the History of Robeson County, N.C.” by James J. Farris)

After receiving this proclamation, the Indians of Robeson County called a special meeting in an attempt to counter-act Gov. Caldwell's proclamation. This political meeting was held at the home of Jesse Oxendine. Oxendine, a carpenter, was chosen by the Scuffletown Indians to represent them, and serve as spokesman for them at all political affairs.

Henry Berry and the Lowry Gang appeared at this political meeting. Shortly before the meeting broke up, Henry Berry left, walking along the foot path that led up to the home of Jesse Oxendine.

Unknown to him, Frank Marden had set up a blind and was waiting impatiently for Henry Berry to come within range; it appears that the white drifter had become greedy. He intended to shoot Henry Berry and take off with Henry Berry's saddlebag which he thought contained the money from the Pope & McLeod robbery.

Unknown to Marden, Steve Lowry had discovered his blind. The Lowry Gang had remained on guard against Marden ever since he had served as hangman when Henderson Oxendine was hanged. They never fully trusted him. While keeping an eye on the white drifter, Steve Lowry saw him constructing a blind while the political meeting was in process. Steve prepared himself a blind, also, and waited to see what Marden had up his sleeve.

As Henry Berry came within range, Marden rose from behind the clump of bushes and prepared to shoot. Before he could carry through his intentions, Steve rose from his blind and shot him with his shot gun, both charges taking full effect in Marden's face.

Before the rest of those in attendance at the meeting could reach the scene of the shooting, Henry Berry switched clothes with the corpse of Frank Marden. One of the first persons at the scene was Louise Chavis. Seeing the corpse at her feet with its face blown away, she ripped off her petticoat and threw it over the face of the corpse, thinking it was Henry Berry Lowry. She feared that some of those in attendance at the meeting might be tempted to take the body to Lumberton and collect the \$12,000 reward.

While Henry Berry slipped away during the confusion of the moment, the rest of the Lowry Gang (Steve, Tom, Boss and Andrew) grabbed up the body and carried it to Tom Lowry's house where it was temporarily buried under his smokehouse. Meanwhile, Henry Berry hid in a secret cave located near the Devil's Den which the Lowry Gang used to store their booty taken on local raids.

Jesse Oxendine, who was a carpenter by trade, built a coffin. The body was exhumed and placed in the coffin. The coffin was placed on a wagon. The remaining Lowry Gang members accompanied the wagon, the convoy stopping along the way to inform the curious onlookers that the body was that of Henry, Berry Lowry. The bloodied face was covered with a white sheet. No one, except Henry Berry's mother and wife, was allowed to view the face. The Lowry Gang boasted all the way from Union Chapel to Peter Dial's near Harper's Ferry that they were going to bury their beloved kinsman and leader where no white man would ever find him. According to this version of the disappearance of Henry Berry Lowry, the body was buried on an island, sitting all alone in the middle of Lumbee River, near Harper's Ferry.

With Henry Berry out of the way, bounty hunters became bolder and more abundant.

One bounty hunter of note was James Donahoe McQueen. McQueen allegedly killed Boss Strong at the home of Andrew Strong, located on the south side of Lumbee (Lumber) River, approximately one mile from Harper's Ferry. Following is McQueen's statement, relating how he allegedly killed Strong.

"Last Thursday night, March 7th, I reached the house of Andrew Strong, on the edge of Scuffletown, about ten miles from Maxton, at 12 o'clock; I fixed a good blind about a hundred and fifty yards from the house, and lying down I watched the rest of the night and all the next day, eating some provisions I had brought along. About half-past seven p.m., Friday, Andrew Strong came out of the woods, and after stopping and looking around him in all directions, he went into the house and directly came out and gave a low call, when Boss Strong came out of the woods to the house; they were each armed with two rifles and two or three revolvers. A little after 8 o'clock, when I thought they would be at supper, I slipped up to the house and looked in through the cat hole in the door, as I supposed they were eating their supper by the light of the hearth. A Miss

Cummings was there, besides Flora, Andrew's wife. I kept watching until Boss laid down on the floor with his feet to the fire and his head towards me, and commenced playing on a mouth harp; then I saw my chance, and I pushed my rifle (a Henry) through the cat-hole until it was not over three feet from his head, and took a steady aim by the light and shot; when I fired the woman screamed and said 'he's shot!' 'no, he isn't!' 'yes, he is!' and I looked in as quick as I could get my gun away. Boss' arms and legs had fallen straight from his body, and there was a little movement of the shoulders, as if he was trying to get up. Andrew Strong was standing in the shadow of the chimney corner, and he stayed there until I left. He said to his wife, 'Honey, you go out and see what it was,' and opened the door opposite the one I was at and pushed her out, but she did not come around to the side where I was, but went in directly and said there was nobody about. He sent her out again, telling her to look in the corners and jams; but before she got well out, he said, 'Come back honey, he was blowing on that thing and it busted and blowed his head off,' and directly after he said, 'My God, he's shot in the head, and it must have come from the cat-hole,' and sent his wife out again; then I slipped off. When I returned the cat-hole was shut up and the house was all dark. I then came back to Maxton, made up a party and went back to the house of Andrew Strong; arriving there about 10 o'clock a.m. on Saturday, we found Rhoda Lowrie, wife of Henry B. Lowrie and sister to Boss and Andrew Strong, wiping up the blood on the floor that had issued from the wound inflicted on Boss Strong. There were several women present, but the body of Boss Strong was nowhere to be found; upon inquiry, we ascertained from the women present, that Steve Lowrie and Andrew Strong had just removed the remains of Boss Strong to some secluded spot, and had threatened the women present, that if they watched them, in order to see which way they went, that they would come back and kill them. So I, and the party that accompanied me, returned to Maxton the same evening, without finding the body of Boss Strong."

As can be gathered by reading McQueen's statement, he was not sure whether Boss Strong was still alive or was, indeed, dead. He stated that "...there was a little movement of the shoulders, as if he was trying to get up." Although the N.C. Legislature, at its 1873-74 session, passed a bill authorizing the state to pay McQueen \$6,000 for killing Boss Strong, this writer is inclined, after sifting through the facts, to come to the conclusion that Boss Strong was not dead, only seriously wounded. As a matter of fact, shortly after this Steve Lowry denied that either Henry Berry Lowry or Boss Strong were dead. He did admit, however, that Boss was "hurt powerful bad."

After Steve Lowry and Andrew Strong left with the wounded Boss Strong, they brought him to the secret cave they used to store their booty taken on raids. Many sources, and this writer is inclined to agree, allege that Henry Berry was hiding out in this cave after the robbery of Pope and McLeod, planning his escape, and that he cared for his trusted friend and companion until he was able to travel. Then Henry Berry Lowry and Boss Strong left the county for parts unknown.

CHAPTER TEN

Henry Berry Lowry Disappears

“Feb. 1871:-HenryBerry is reported to have been killed by Steve Lowery. ALL A HOAX. I hear from them occasionally. It turns out that this Frank Marden is a detective in the employ of the Lowery clan and has rendered them good service. H. B. claims to have paid Marden a large sum of money. It is supposed that Marden was the planner of the late robbery.”
 (“Unpublished Diary of Francis Marion Wishart”)

In all fairness, this writer must confess that the version of Henry Berry Lowry's disappearance described in the preceding chapter, is only one of several versions of his mysterious disappearance. It is a fact, however, that the \$12,000 bounty on his head was never collected, The version of his disappearance in the preceding chapter was told to this writer by a very knowledgeable and distinguished gentleman.

What did happen to Henry Berry Lowry?

Did he perish at his own hands like Mrs. Mary C. Norment describes in “The Lowrie History?” Mrs. Norment relates:

“Early on the Morning of February 20th, 1872, between daylight and sunrise, the whole band of outlaws returned to the house of Tom Lowrie after their raid on Lumberton, having on the previous night entered the store of Messrs. Pope & McLeod, and abstracting therefrom an iron safe, and proceeding thence to the Court House and entering the Sheriff's office and taking along his iron safe, proceeded forthwith to leave Lumberton by way of the turnpike road leading across the country by Morrissey's mill, Finding their load too heavy, they dropped the Sheriff's safe on the streets of Lumberton and went on with the safe of Messrs. Pope & McLeod to a distance of about three miles and rifled it of the whole of its contents, getting in all about twenty-two thousand dollars. The band then wended its way to the house of Tom Lowrie, in Scuffletown, and, being fearful of pursuit, built up a fire near the crib of Tom Lowrie and commenced fixing their fire arms, in case they would be attacked by any party in pursuit of them; and here the outlaw chief, Henry B. Lowrie, terminated his own earthly career. Whilst attempting to draw a load out of his double barrel gun, the gun slipping in his hand, the hammer of one of the barrels struck against a sill of the crib and the gun went off, the load taking effect in Henry Berry Lowrie's face and forehead, tearing away his nose and the greater portion of his forehead. He died

almost instantly. Thus perished the great robber chief of Robeson County. Preparations were set on foot immediately for his burial. A party of Indians went to the saw mill of Mr. Archibald Buie for lumber, which had to be sawed. When the lumber was obtained, Jesse Oxendine (being a carpenter) was called in and made the coffin[,] the other outlaws standing guard all the time. When all the necessary preparations were completed, the remains of the dead robber chief were temporarily placed in a shallow grave under Tom Lowrie's crib. On the following night, near mid-night, the remaining outlaws took up the body of the dead robber chief and carried it off and buried it, where, in all human probability, no white man will ever find out.

“Thus passed away this remarkable bandit, in his twenty-sixth year -- the greatest scourge ever inflicted upon the good people of Robeson county. He was said to have had a good deal of money in his possession at this time, as his comrades in arms often reported to outsiders that he was in the habit of appropriating 'the lion's share' to his own use of all the money taken, giving to the other outlaws the other booty. No member of the band, not even his 'fidus Achates,' Boss Strong, nor his wife, Rhoda Lowrie, knew where he kept his money. Diligent search has been made by the remaining members of the gang to find his treasure chest, but as yet, 'it is love's labor lost.' For some time after the death of Henry Berry Lowrie, his companions, denied all knowledge of his fate; even his relations professed to be ignorant of it, but the facts, one by one, leaked out through different individuals of the Indian race, who saw the dead robber chief whilst 'lying in state' before his interment. The main object in keeping his fate concealed from the public seems to have been to keep the timid whites in awe of the 'outlaw gang,' and to prevent those who were endeavoring to capture him from getting his body...”

Another advocate of the theory that Henry Berry accidentally shot himself, was A. Boyd Henderson. Henderson wrote an article concerning Henry Berry's disappearance in the March 26, 1872 edition of “The New York Herald.” Henderson's account follows:

(“To Die Game” by W. McKee Evans): “From evidence the most reliable when connected with a well-connected chain of circumstances; I am able to give you a correct account of the death of the robber chief.

“Between February 13 and 16, in company with his fidus Achates, Boss Strong, Henry Berry Lowery was ranging in country in the neighborhood of Moss Neck in search of some person who he had been informed was hunting him, while Steve and Tom Lowery were stationed at a rendezvous on the Lumber river... They discovered in the bushes a new-made 'blind' (a place of concealment or ambush made by intertwining the branches of the thickly grown bushes). It was not then occupied and Henry Berry, believing it had been recently made by one of his pursuers, who would shortly return to it, ensconced himself in it, while Boss made a blind for himself a short distance off, covering the road. But a few minutes after

they had placed themselves in their respective positions the report of a gun was heard from Henry's hiding place, and when Boss, who waited to hear a word from his chief or an answering shot from an enemy, cautiously approached the spot,(.) Henry Berry Lowry lay on his back, ... the whole front of his head blown off. The broken ramrod and the missing wiper showed that he had been trying to draw a load from his gun."

Was it possible that Henry Berry Lowry escaped from the area? Reverend D.F. Lowry, a nephew of Henry Berry's (Rev. Lowry's father was Calvin who was Henry Berry's brother), thought so. His theory, as found in "To Die Game" by W. Evans, was based on two facts: "1st. When Gen. Gorman came with a militia and demanded an equal number of men in Robeson County to join him to hunt the outlaws ... they searched for about 3 months and disbanded, not having apprehended a single outlaw. Here is the secret: Gen. Gorman on his arrival went over to the home of Henry B(erry) and told his mother to tell H.B. to meet him at Mossneck Swamp at first dark -- stating that he, Gen. Gorman, knowing the situation, did not intend to hurt him. H.B. met him and Gen. Gorman put a uniform on Henry Berry and H.B. helped to search for the outlaws -- finding none of them. This is a true story because my brother, Billy, who lived to be 100 yrs and 3 months, told me and I will be 90 at my next birthday. Bro. Billy told me Henry Berry helped him ... hive bees more than one time on Sunday.

"Therefore, Bro. Bill knew Henry Berry and had met him several times with a militia uniform with a crew of soldiers and that Henry Berry would sign them by shaking his head at them to say nothing.

"2nd. When (I was) quite young an aged Indian, Mr. Marcus Dial, told me that he saw Henry B. standing in the woods above Wash Lowries on Sunday A.M. and Henry called Dial to him and said that Gen. Gorman was leaving from Pates with his militia and he had asked me (Henry B.) to go along with them and he would bandage several men around their faces in order to hide a spot on H.B.'s face so that the general public would not know H.B. He then asked Mr. Dial what to do about it. Mr. Dial told me that he said to Henry B. by all means I would go with them. Mr. Dial told me that he was at the station when the militia were being loaded and a dozen or more had white bandages on and he had never seen Henry Berry again."

A grandnephew of Henry Berry's, Dr. Earl C. Lowry, also believed Henry Berry escaped. His theory also appears in "To Die Game" by W. McKee Evans. Says Dr. Lowry "Henry Berry made and executed a perfect plan for his escape.

"He told his wife how unreasonable it would be for him to remain longer and left her some money, bidding her goodbye. The next day he spent with his mother, sitting on the porch, most of the day shooting robins. He also left her some money... Tom Lowry shot a rabbit, removed its brains and dashed them out at Steve's home. A gun fired off. Henry Berry removed most of his arms and fled. A

dummy of straw was placed in the pond back of the home of Steve and it was reported that Henry Berry had been killed by his own gun. Many of the curious came there and saw the dummy but none but his mother 'was allowed to see the head. Lumber was obtained from a sawmill for the stated purpose of building a coffin in which to bury Henry Berry. Jesse Oxendine was employed to build the box. With the box the remaining members of the gang went from a point near Union Chapel to the home of Peter Dial, near Harper's Ferry, where the boards were removed and made into a cart. No trace of the burial was ever found, and the dummy was unstuffed and its straw thrown into a pond.

"Armed with two small pistols and dressed in a Federal soldier's uniform, Henry Berry Lowry boarded the train as it pulled out of Pates. His trusted body guard, Andrew Strong stood guard at a box car... At Moss Neck another member of the gang waited at the station platform 'in case he was needed.'"

This writer is inclined to agree with Col. Francis Marion Wishart who reports in his diary: "Feb. 18, 1872: Henry Berry is reported to have been killed by Steve Lowery. ALL A HOAX. I hear from them occasionally. It turns out that this Frank Marden is a detective in the employ of the Lowery clan and has rendered them good service. H. B. claims to have paid Marden a large sum of money. It is supposed that Marden was the planner of the late robbery [the Pope & McLeod store robbery]."

Needless to say, no living soul knows for certain what actually was Henry Berry Lowry's fate. There are a number of discrepancies in the theories covered in this chapter.

The theories that contend that he accidentally killed himself, to this writer's way of thinking, offer no concrete evidence. It was no coincidence that the state legislators raised the bounty on Henry Berry's head during the first week of February, 1872; the store of Pope & McLeod was robbed of \$22,000 (not to mention the \$6,000 taken from the sheriff's safe) approximately one week later; and that Henry Berry Lowry disappeared from the area at approximately the same time that the governor of the state issued a proclamation stating the increased rewards and exhorting the citizens of the state to do all in their power to annihilate the Lowry Gang.

The theory that Henry Berry left with the federal soldiers, with a bandage wrapped around his head, does not hold water, either. The last of the federal soldiers left the county October 15, 1871. If one recalls, it was only 4 days later (October 19, 1871) that Col. Francis Marlon Wishart's diary records Henry Berry as saying that " ...he is going to leave as soon as the weather is cooler."

The fact of the matter is that no one knows what became of Henry Berry Lowry. And that is one of the things that makes the saga of Henry Berry Lowry so thrilling and intriguing.



RHODA STRONG LOWRY'S TOMBSTONE. Rhoda, wife of Henry Berry Lowry, said shortly before she died that Henry Berry was "the handsomest man she ever saw." Rhoda's tombstone says she died October 18, 1909 and she was about 55. Actually she must have been about 60 because she married Henry Berry in December, 1865 at the age of 16. Also, when "the Lowrie History" was published by the Lumbee Publishing Company in 1909, the year Rhoda died, the publishers interviewed Rhoda. They report: "At the time of our visit there was not a suggestion of age In Rhoda's face, form or hair, and it seemed hard to realize that she ... must be well on toward 60."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Col. Wishart Murdered Tom Lowry Murdered

“...As the train was about to move off, Col. Wishart returned to the car, and meeting Stephen on the platform, the latter was heard to say: 'When I send for you, you come. I'll send a friend for you in a few days, and you come and meet us,' and Col. Wishart promised to do so.”

(“The Lowrie History” by Mary C. Norment)

Col. Francis Marion Wishart reports in his diary that the night James Donahoe McQueen supposedly killed Boss Strong, “Boss and Andrew were cursing out the Lowery men very bad.”

This was probably due to the struggle for leadership of the Lowry Gang that occurred when Henry Berry Lowry disappeared. Boss Strong was next in line as leader as far as cunning, shrewdness, and leadership ability were concerned. Steve Lowry, however, Henry Berry's hot-headed brother who possessed a vile temper, thought he should take over the reins of power of the gang. Steve cared little for planning and caution, two traits necessary to be a good leader.

Col. Marion Francis Wishart became discouraged and disgusted and returned to Shoe Heel (now Maxton) to manage his business.

A few weeks following McQueen's “remarkable exploits” -- if that is how one would describe shooting a man in cold blood through a cat hole in the door just for the money -- Wishart was aboard the regular train that arrived at Moss Neck at about 3 p. m. Wishart was at the time occupying a seat in the conductor's cab in rear of the train. As soon as the train halted, Andrew Strong and Steve Lowry approached Wishart. According to Mrs. Norment in “The Lowrie History,” “Stephen Lowrie inquired whether he had any arms, and went aboard the cab to satisfy himself on that point. Andrew Strong remaining on the piazza of the store, within a few feet of the train. Andrew was in his shirt-sleeves and wore only one pistol in his belt, but Stephen carried in his hand a Spencer rifle and in his belt five elegant pistols - two Derringers, one Smith & Wesson and two Colt's. On entering the car, Stephen demanded to see his arms, when Col. Wishart drew aside the skirt of his coat and displayed the handle of a repeater, which he assured the outlaw was the only weapon he carried. Stephen at once made a grab at the pistol, as if to snatch it from its place, but Col. Wishart foiled his attempt by dexterously leaping from the car to the piazza of the store, where the other outlaw was standing, and, confronting Stephen, with hand upon his pistol.

Stephen and Andrew both now assured him that they meant him no harm, and only wished a friendly conference, and at Andrew's request, he walked with him behind the store, where they remained for sometime in conversation, while Stephen remained on board the car, and seemed to take no interest in what was passing between his comrade and Col. Wishart. As the train was about to move off, Col. Wishart returned to the car, and meeting Stephen on the platform, the latter was heard to say: 'When I send for you, you come. I'll send a friend for you in a few days, and you come and meet us,' and Col. Wishart promised to do so." This incident occurred on a Friday.

The following Thursday, a man brought Wishart a message by his store. Wishart went by his home and informed his wife that he would be gone a little while. After borrowing a neighbor's mule, he headed for Scuffletown, which was about 10 miles away. The note had been from the Lowrys. Although Wishart had resigned himself from the task of ridding the county of the Lowry Gang, he could not resist one last chance to have a conference with the Lowrys. Perhaps they wanted to talk on terms of a peaceful surrender. As "AN UNPUBLISHED DIARY OF COL. FRANCIS MARION WISHART" relates: "Perhaps they wanted to know if they would be permitted to go away quietly as their leader had recently done."

The note arranged for Col. Wishart to meet Steve Lowry near Lebanon Presbyterian Church on May 2, 1872. The two were reportedly to discuss and arrange a compromise which would "benefit the county by causing the outlaws to leave in some manner."

Wishart was placing his trust in the gang's reputation for integrity. In days past, when Henry Berry was leader, the Lowry Gang always abided by their word. But Wishart was dealing with the unpredictable Steve Lowry who did not even know the meaning of integrity. As an added precaution -- for Steve Lowry trusted no white man -- he had Andrew concealed in a clump of bushes at the site of the meeting.

The two foes met as planned, apparently unarmed. After conferring for a time, the men decided to leave. "As Steve turned to go, Wishart (being unable to resist the temptation) drew a revolver, which he had concealed, and shot" at Steve. At precisely the same time, Andrew, who witnessed the whole scene from his place of concealment, rose and shot Wishart with his shot gun, which was loaded with buckshot. At approximately 4 o'clock, on the same day, William Sellars, a local white planter, found Col. Wishart's body. The lifeless body was "riddled with buck shot."

The local white citizens were so terror-stricken that it was difficult, indeed, to collect together a number of men to go and retrieve the body.

No doubt, the murder of Col. Francis Marion Wishart was planned by Steve Lowry to show the whites of the county that he meant what he said July 3, 1871

when he noted there “is no use hunting his gang. If the Governor or Sheriff wanted to order out men to fight, they would not have to hunt, for we, he said, will kill every one of them...”

Steve Lowry sent word to Wishart's brothers to leave the county. Instead, Francis Marion Wishart's younger brother, Aladon Strong Wishart, and his 19-year-old half-brother, Robert Evander Wishart, joined together with James McKay and James Campbell, and formed another man hunt.

Steve Lowry, Tom Lowry, and Andrew Strong found themselves all alone (without a responsible head to guide them) after the death of Wishart.

Henry Berry Lowry had made his mysterious disappearance that still baffles people to this day. Boss Strong had made his controversial disappearance from the area. George Applewhite was reportedly in Goldsboro, not in any danger because of the recently-passed General Amnesty Act which applied to him and absolved him of all war-time crimes. Zach McLaughlin was killed by Henry Biggs who later wrote Henry Berry Lowry a letter begging Henry Berry to let him return to Robeson County. Henderson Oxendine was hanged in Lumberton; Frank Marden served as hangman. Marden had disappeared from the area at about the same time as Henry Berry, prompting one to deduce that the two's disappearances were somehow related.

The three remaining Lowry Gang members were determined to carry on life as before, darting in and out of the swamps at their leisure. Things just weren't the same without the able leadership of the shrewd and cunning Henry Berry Lowry, however. No doubt, the three began to wonder about Henry Berry's prediction that they would all be dead within two years if they did not leave the county with him.

Already, the self-proclaimed leader, Steve Lowry had made a major mistake, killing Col. Wishart. As mentioned earlier, Steve warned Wishart's two brothers to leave the county. Instead, they took to the swamps, along with James McKay and James Campbell, in search of the remaining Lowry Gang members.

On the 18th of July, the four Lowry hunters set out to rid the county of the remaining Lowry Gang members. By hiding in church lofts by day, and only venturing out at nights, they learned that Tom Lowry visited regularly at the home of Furney Pevatte, a white friend. The bounty hunters arrived at Pevatte's house shortly after dark and set up blinds at the edge of the woods near the house. They remained there that night and until dark the next day at which time they ventured a little closer to the house.

Shortly thereafter, Tom Lowry came out of the house in the company of a young woman and they entered a nearby crib. Fearing killing the woman, the bounty hunters stationed themselves outside the crib and waited for a clear shot at Tom

Lowry. While awaiting a clear shot, the bounty hunters overheard the conversation between Tom Lowry and the woman. Tom Lowry mentioned that he was planning on attending a political meeting at Union Chapel the next morning, Saturday, July 20, 1872. The bounty hunters decided to wait until the next morning.

Guessing the route the daring Indian would take to arrive at the political meeting, the bounty hunters prepared blinds at Holly Swamp, a small branch of Raft Swamp. Nearby, at precisely the same time, Steve Lowry and Andrew Strong were constructing a blind in an unsuccessful attempt to ambush Sheriff Roderick McMillan who had successfully evaded the wrath of the Lowry Gang by seldom, if ever, venturing outside the city limits of Lumberton while Henry Berry Lowry led the Lowry Gang.

At about eight o'clock Saturday morning, Tom Lowry and his white friend, Furney Prevatte appeared. Prevatte was arguing with Lowry, trying to persuade him to turn back. The journey was too dangerous, he argued. Lowry was adamant in his insistence to attend the political meeting, nevertheless.

At this point, Tom Lowry knelt down on one knee to examine a set of foot prints probably made by one of the four bounty hunters while preparing the blinds. Realizing a blind was probably constructed nearby, Prevatte's arguments became more urgent.

"I'll go to Union Chapel if it means the death of me," the 35-year-old Lowry Gang member insisted. At about this time, James McKay opened fire. Lowry and Prevatte fled in different directions. By this time the other three bounty hunters had opened fire also. Prevatte was permitted to escape. All the gunfire was directed at Tom Lowry. After receiving serious wounds, he ran into the swamp for a distance of about one hundred yards. The bounty hunters were close behind.

"When they came up with him he tried to draw his pistol to fire on them, but was too far gone to carry his intentions into effect, and fell back a corpse. He had a Spencer rifle in his hand ... which was clutched so tightly that the party had to loosen the fingers, one by one, by main force. Then they put him on a hastily improvised litter and bore him thus about half a mile, when they met a wagon on the way to a political meeting, to which it was said Lowry was also bound... The party got possession of the wagon, placed the corpse into it and carried it to Lumberton. It was then fully identified ... after which it was delivered to his wife who had followed the remains of her husband to Lumberton." (July 23, 1872 edition of the "Wilmington Star.")

She was informed of Tom Lowry's fate by Prevatte who raced to Lowry's cabin after escaping the bounty hunters. A gold watch belonging to John McNair, \$130 in currency, a Spanish dollar, and a key fitting the front door of the Pope & McLeod store in Lumberton, was taken off Tom Lowry's person.

The key to the Pope & McLeod store in Lumberton suggests two things: First, although the other Lowry Gang members refused to leave with Henry Berry Lowry they helped him rob the store; and second, the key had to be obtained by someone who could move about freely in Lumberton without the townspeople being suspicious. Also, only \$130 was found in Tom Lowry's possession at the time of his death. What became of the \$22,000 from the safe of Pope & McLeod and the \$6,000 from the safe of the sheriff's office?

The next day, Tom Lowry's funeral was preached at New Hope Chapel in the Eureka community (now Pates). Practically every Indian in the Scuffletown area attended the funeral. Reportedly, many were heavily armed. Tom Lowry's remains were interred in Back Swamp Grave Yard where many of his ancestors were buried before him. His murderers received \$6,000 from the state and \$200 from the county commissioners for their gruesome task. The money was equally divided among Aladon Strong Wishart, Robert E. Wishart, James McKay and James Campbell.

In the month of September, 1872 Steve Lowry offered \$200 each for a number of bounty hunters who were hot on their tracks. As stated, however, the bounty on each of them (Andrew and Steve) was \$6,000.

According to W. McKee Evans in "To Die Game," "Stephen Lowrey attended a justice's court at Union Chapel Church, in Burnt Swamp township ... on Saturday last (November 2, 1872) and spent the day witnessing a trial in which two whites were concerned ... The outlaw carried in his hands a Spencer rifle and wore in his belt around him several large pistols. He seemed perfectly at ease during the trial, at the close of which he invited some members of the bar and others to join him in a glass of sweet cider, there being a barrel on the ground. Subsequently he requested a private interview with Colonel W. Foster French, one of the counsel in the case, before the court, when he proposed to purchase a small tract of land belonging to Colonel F(rench), in the Scuffletown region. The Colonel informed him that he could have no transactions with an outlaw, when Lowrey said he expected as much, but thought there would be no harm in making the proposal. He evinced considerable feeling when informed of the reported capture of George Applewhite in Georgia."

Steve Lowry and Andrew Strong could be seen at almost any public gathering. They were always together, however, and always heavily armed.

On Christmas day (December 25), 1872 Andrew Strong relaxed his guard a little too much.

Mrs. Mary C. Norment recounts the killing of Andrew Strong in "The Lowrie History": "Mr. William Wilson, a native of Guilford county, aged thirty-eight, being in the employ of A. & W. McQueen, incurred by some means or other, the

displeasure of Steve Lowrie and Andrew Strong, the only two remaining outlaws. Sometime in the month of December 1872, therefore, Steve Lowrie, and Andrew Strong, on the morning of December 25, 1872, went to the store of Mr. John Humphrey at Pates, a station on the Carolina Central Railway, in the heart of Scuffletown, where Mr. William Wilson was a clerk, and informed him that he had been talking about them. Mr. Wilson did not say much, one way or the other, whereupon Andrew Strong told Mr. Wilson 'that he would give him until train time the next day to leave the county, and that if he did not leave, that he (Andrew Strong) would kill him;' they then left Pates, heavily armed on a Christmas Frolic. Mr. Wilson, after their departure, loaded up a double-barrel shot-gun with buck-shot, and concealed it under a coverlet in an adjoining room for use whenever the outlaws would make their appearance. So about 4 o'clock p.m., on the same day, Andrew Strong alone made his appearance again at the store of Mr. John Humphrey, and after purchasing a few articles of merchandise, turned and walked out on the piazza in front of the store, and leaning up against a post with his back towards the door of the store, Mr. Wilson deliberately fired on him, the shot taking effect in the neck of the outlaw, killing him almost instantly. Several Indians being present, Mr. Wilson informed them that whoever touched or laid his hand on the body of Andrew Strong, he 'would kill him instantly with the other barrel of his shot-gun, which was then cocked; he then pressed a wagon and a pair of mules and compelled John Humphrey, Floyd Oxendine and two other Indians, (names not recollected) to place the body of Andrew Strong on the wagon and accompany him, with the remains of the dead outlaw, to Lumberton, where the whole party arrived sometime after nightfall, and formally delivered the body of Andrew Strong to the Sheriff of the county, who identified it as the body of Andrew Strong, and paid forthwith the reward which had been offered for the body of Andrew Strong, dead or alive, and fixed up the papers for Mr. Wilson to draw from the State Treasury the amount offered by the State, which amount the State Treasurer paid Mr. Wilson as soon as he presented the papers. Thus perished Andrew Strong, another of the Robeson county outlaws. He was the elder brother of Boss Strong, and was in his twenty-fourth year. He was a little over six feet high, tall and slim, and nearly white; he possessed beard somewhat of a reddish color, and had dark straight hair on his head... He married the daughter of Henry Sampson, another Indian of Scuffletown."

Steve Lowry was now the only remaining outlawed Lowry Gang member in the Scuffletown area.

Mrs. Mary C. Norment covers the last days of Steve Lowry in explicit detail in "The Lowrie History."

She reports: "Although he strode from place to place, apparently at ease and without fear, his paths were watched. It was no easy matter, though it may appear so to those unacquainted with the real facts in the case, to come up with him. Those who were eagerly in pursuit of him, found it difficult to locate him. Today he might be at the house of one of his many friends for a few hours; it

might be weeks before he would visit the same place again. A few weeks before he was killed, a party of three who had been lying in wait for hours near the house of a colored man, where he was known to call very often in passing, had the pleasure of seeing him emerge from the house and take his place for a chat in such a position as to give them an opportunity of giving him a taste of powder, but they, so eager for the game, fired too hasty -- and missed. He ran and made good his escape unhurt, amid a shower of shot. This warning made him more cautious, and led him to avoid such places in future. He left that portion of the neighborhood and went higher up, where in a few weeks time met his just doom at the hands of the young men whose names will appear in the following particulars:

"The families of Messrs. D. Holcomb and Davis Bullard were frequently annoyed by the visits of Steve Lowrie. It was at the house of the father of Davis (Mr. E. Bullard) that the two young men above named met Steve in December, 1873, and jointly resolved to take his life or rid their families of his company. They accordingly left the house and proceeded to station themselves on the road which they supposed he would go on his way home. Steve remained until about 9 o'clock and left, taking the direction in which the boys had gone, but before getting to them took a by-path, thus escaping them. Several weeks after this, Mr. Holcomb was on his way to Red Banks, a depot on the Carolina Central Railway, when he was met and accosted by Steve. He inquired of Mr. H. where he was going. He told him, and in turn made the same inquiry of Steve. He replied that he was going over to a whlskey wagon that had camped a short distance off. Each then went on his way. In the afternoon of the same day, as Mr. H. was returning from the Banks, he again met Steve, in company with the wagon that he had spoken of in the morning. He told Mr. Holcomb that he must go back with him a mile or so to McLaughlin's (the mother of the notorious Zach. McLaughlin) to borrow a jug to put some whisky in, which he had bought from the wagoner. When they reached McLaughlin's Steve asked Mr. Holcomb if he brought any letters from the office. He told him that he had one for Mr. Purcell. He desired Mr. H. to open and read the letter to him. This he refused, telling him that if he would go to Mr. Purcell's he would read it for him. He readily consented to do this, requesting Mr. H. to accompany him. He mounted Mr. Holcomb's horse, compelling him to take a seat behind him. Mr. Holcomb objected to this style of riding, and proposed to go to Mr. Bullard's and borrow another animal, to which he assented. Mr. H. had another object in view in going to this place, which Steve did not suspect. While he was getting another animal he was also laying a plan with Mr. Thomas Bullard to go and get his brother Robert Holcomb to waylay the road, and on their return to pick Lowrie off; but he again frustrated them by taking a by-way. When they reached Mr. Purcell's and the letter was handed him, Steve remarked that his business there was to know the contents of that letter. It was read to him, but it was not concerning the petition for his pardon, as he thought, and which was the cause of his showing so much interest in it."

As was the case with Henry Berry Lowry, some of Steve's friends were circulating a petition asking that the governor pardon Steve. As with Henry Berry Lowry, however, the governor was Republican but could not grant Steve a pardon because there was a Conservative majority in the legislature.

Mrs. Norment's account continues: "After leaving Mr. Purcell's, Steve went to the house of Mr. Holcomb and remained about one hour. Davis Bullard was also there, and Steve told him and Mr. H. that they must go to the house of a Mr. Jones that lived near, and get him some chickens. They started, but instead of going to Mr. Jones', they went to Mr. Patterson's, called him out, told him the situation, and requested him to go with him. Before starting they went to the fowlhouse and took a chicken, in order to disarm Steve of any suspicion which might arise in his mind from their prolonged stay. They had parted with Steve at a negro house, and on their return were to go with him to the house of Purcell Locklear, where there was a whiskey wagon camped. Mr. Patterson left them to conceal himself on the road until they would pass, and he was then to go on to the wagon. Steve being ever on the alert, would have at once suspected some scheme if Mr. P. had gone in company with them. Their object in getting Mr. P. to go with them was to assist in ridding the county then and there of the last outlaw, should opportunity offer. The boys were unarmed, but Mr. H. picked up an axe, intending to kill him with it, but Steve turned suddenly, and again they were thwarted. Seeing no prospect of a chance that night, they left.

"About two weeks after this, Steve was again at Mr. E. Bullard's, and stayed until after supper. As soon as Davis learned that he was at the house of his father, he went after Mr. Holcomb to go with him to waylay the road, hoping to be more successful. They stationed themselves on the road, taking their stand behind the posts of a gate to await his coming. This time they were doomed to disappointment, for in passing the gate he walked so near the post as to render it impossible to bring their guns to bear upon him. A short time after this, Mr. Holcomb heard of him in the neighborhood, and got Mr. Sutton to go with him to endeavor to learn his whereabouts; they concluded to get Mr. Patterson also, and went to his house for that purpose. Davis Bullard had also heard of him, and had been before them, and he, in company with Mr. Patterson, had gone to try and intercept him. As they were not sufficiently supplied with ammunition, they went to the house of Mr. H. to supply themselves. When they came near the house they heard some one picking the banjo; on waiting a short time they learned it was Steve. They were confident that the other boys were somewhere in the vicinity, and walked around to see if they could get together. They soon found them, and together took their places near the hay-loft, where Steve had slept sometime before. They sat there until near 11 o'clock, when they concluded he would not remain all night, and changed their position over near the road that he would take should he go home. In a few minutes he came out and went into the loft passing in a few feet of their first stand. They gave up the chase for this time, but with the determination to try again whenever opportunity offered.

"Friday night before he was killed the following Monday there was a social gathering at the house of Mr. Neill Patterson. Two of the boys present walked out; a short distance from the house some one hailed them which proved to be Steve Lowrie. He conversed with them a short time, and during the conversation laughed so loud as to be heard at the house. Messrs. McPatterson and Davis Bullard were sitting at the time out in the yard laying a plan to kill him. They heard and recognized his voice. Davis walked out and took him to one side to have a private chat with him, and to learn if possible where he might be for a day or two. He proposed to Steve to make up a party somewhere in the neighborhood and they would have some fun. Steve readily agreed, and appointed one to be at Hugh McLean's the following Tuesday night. He told Davis he must be sure and attend, told him who to invite, and to speak of it to no one else, and particularly to keep it a secret from McPatterson and John Bridgers. He then left. The next day Mr. T. Bullard and McPatterson were at the Banks. There were also two whiskey wagons. The above gentlemen heard the wagoners say they intended camping at Martin McNair's (colored) that night and until the following Monday. They came home, reported the same to Messrs. Holcomb and Davis Bullard, and they laid plans accordingly; they knew that Steve was in the habit of visiting the wagons that camped at this place. The day following (being Sunday) they were to meet at church and mature their plans. Messrs. Holcomb and Bullard did not return to their own homes, but went to the house of a neighbor in order to slip up to the wagon after dark without any one's becoming aware of their plans except their own party. After dark they crept up in about fifty yards of the wagoner's camp to learn if Steve was there. A loud laugh rang out on the stillness of the night which they at once recognized as Steve Lowrie's. They were sure of the game now; they fully intended this night to end the drama; the following day should herald to an outraged people the end of outlawry in Robeson. The brave fellows who had clogged his footsteps and wisely kept their own counsel, proceeded to the house of Mr. E. Bullard to procure their arms. Here they found Messrs. Patterson and Sutton. They did not have guns sufficient to arm a party of four, and Mr. Holcomb proposed to Davis to lend his gun to Mr. Sutton and he (Davis) to go to the wagon, and keep a bright fire, and also to arrange so as to give them a chance of a fair trial of their skill at the outlaw. Davis, only a boy of eighteen, being so eager for the fray, at first refused; the others insisted, as Steve had more confidence in Davis than any of their party, and had never been known to evince any anger or to express a doubt with regard to him. It being necessary that some one cognizant of their plan should be in company with Steve in order to succeed, Davis finally consented, and at once proceeded to the wagon before the other boys took their places. Messrs. Holcomb and Sutton selected their position inside of a fence on the opposite side of the road from the wagon, and about twenty-five yards distant. They learned at once that they had an excellent opportunity of singling Steve out from the balance of the Indians and negroes, about a dozen of whom were also at the wagon. Mr. Holcomb raised his gun to take aim, when Mr. Sutton remarked that he had lost the cap from his gun. Mr. H. then took a cap from his gun, split it so as to fit a musket and banded it to him, but he (Mr. S.) was so excited that he dropped it. Being now without caps, they had to go to Mr.

Bullard's (one-fourth of a mile) to get some, after which they returned to their position. Here they waited some time without an opportunity of a shot, and being tired, crawled off some little distance and lay down to rest. On going back, they overheard Steve making a plan to take some of the crowd and go to Mr. John McNair's to get some chickens; they then decided to go and waylay the road to Mr. McNair's and shoot him as he passed. There they waited some time, and as they did not go on, concluded that the party had gone another way. They started back to ascertain, and met Messrs. Tom Bullard and Charlie Holcomb. They informed them that Steve was still at the wagon. And it was their impression that he intended remaining. The boys all went on to Mr. E. Bullard's and requested Mr. Patterson to go home and get his gun and go back to their old stand. He at once, in company with Mr. Sutton, went after his gun, and Mr. Holcomb returned to his former position alone, to await their return. Mr. Tom Bullard went to the wagon to try and learn what was to be the order of the night. In the meantime, Messrs. Patterson and Sutton joined Mr. Holcomb, and together, they were awaiting Mr. Bullard's report; he came in a few moments, reporting that Steve had sent for his 'banjo,' and without doubt would remain at the wagon all night, and he also learned that Steve had, with a party of several, been to Mr. McNair's, entered his fowl-house by breaking three locks and brought 6 chickens and a large turkey to the wagon; the chickens had been cooked and eaten -- the turkey was on cooking for breakfast. He compelled Davis Bullard to accompany him to Mr. McNair's. Steve was a firm believer in conjuration, and kept on hand a supply of roots, bones, &c.; before he started after the chickens, he took something from his pocket, put it in a bottle of whiskey, and after shaking it well together, anointed his person with it, remarking at the time with an oath, that there was not a man in the State that could hit him with a shot. The party, after hearing this report, proceeded to their old stand near the fence. They discovered Steve sitting with his head down, putting his banjo in tune, and determined as soon as he would raise his head that they would fire. In a moment he threw his head back and commenced his tune, when simultaneously the guns fired which ended his career on earth... With a deep groan, he fell forward lifeless, without warning... They at once made arrangements to carry his body to Lumberton, where it was delivered to the Sheriff, amid the shouts and acclamation of a large crowd. It being court week in Lumberton, the judge was there, and in his charge highly commended the young men for their praise-worthy act.

"Their papers to obtain the reward placed upon his head being duly made out, signed and delivered to them, Messrs. Patterson and Sutton took the cars for Raleigh, where they received the sum offered for the body of Stephen Lowrie -- the last outlaw in Robeson."

And so ended a great period of history in Robeson County. The intriguing story of Henry Berry Lowry ends with the murder of Steve Lowry, the last of the Lowry Gang, in February, 1874.

But did, or will the story ever end? I think not. For, you see, Henry Berry Lowry instilled the fighting spirit within Lumbee (River) Indians' hearts when they routed the Ku Klux Klan in nearby Maxton, N.C. in the latter part of the 1950's.

Approximately twenty-five years later, after routing the clan, Henry Berry gave his people courage to speak out against an unfair practice known as "double-voting." Changing with the times, instead of fighting in the streets, the Indians fought the "double-voting" battle in the courts. The courts found the practice to be unconstitutional. "Double-voting" was broken.

Pembroke State University was once an all-Indian school. Desegregation has ended all that. But Lumbee (River) Indians are proud of the fact that although P.S.U. now has a majority white enrollment, the university originated from a \$500 appropriation from state legislators in 1885 to build a school for Robeson County Indians who had been deprived of an education for 50 years. A Red Springs lawyer and legislator, Hamilton McMillan heard a speech by George Lowry, Henry Berry's uncle, in front of the Lumberton Courthouse in the 1860's. He became fascinated and interested in the desperate plight of the Lumbee (River) Indians; later he introduced a bill which named the then nameless Indians "Croatan Indians" and appropriated \$500 to begin a school for them.

"Old Main," a building on the PSU campus, once housed the only 4-year, degree-conferring Indian college in America. When plans were made by university officials in the 1970's to tear down the stately and historic building to make room for progress, Lumbee (River) Indians once again rebelled. A successful campaign was initiated to "Save Old Main." Thanks to this movement "Old Main" will soon be completely restored.

No, Henry Berry Lowry did not die. He simply seeped into the very hearts and souls of every Lumbee (River) Indian in Robeson and adjacent counties.

Long live Henry Berry Lowry! Long live the Lumbee (River) Indian Nation!

ADDENDUM

by Bruce Barton

Henry Berry Lowry and the Lumbee Indians

"This history of imposed name changes suggests the discontent and search for an identity that produced Henry Berry Lowry..."
(Bruce Barton)

For the Lumbee Indians in Robeson County, North Carolina, Henry Berry Lowry is still alive, though no one has heard from him for more than a hundred years. "He's as bad as Henry Berry Lowry," they say when a fellow Lumbee does something particularly brave or audacious. Of a "white" or "apple" Indian - an Indian with a white heart - they say "Henry Berry Lowry would have no use for that fellow."

Although Henry Berry Lowry disappeared in 1872, he still means hope to the Lumbee Indians. He is their hero, dreamer, achiever, doer, trend setter, one of the "baddest" warriors an Indian tribe ever had. To the people, he is bigger than life, a star to sight upon.

Brewton Betty in ALMOST WHITE (1963) says: "All agree, friend and foe alike, that Henry Berry Lowry was the making of the (Lumbee) Indians. He focused attention upon their grievances... To the (Lumbee) Indian people, he gave courage, hope and determination."

Robeson County is unique among North Carolina counties. The population is almost equally divided among Indians, Blacks and whites. Approximately one third of the ninety thousand inhabitants are Lumbee Indians, members of a tribe that has survived the encroachment of European whites better than other North American Indians. The strong and independent Lumbees have contributed doctors, lawyers, teachers, political leaders and business leaders to both Robeson County and the United States, in spite of seemingly impossible odds.

Their lot has not always been so good. Change has been slow and gradual; it has also been resisted. Whites have been reluctant to open the political, economic and social life of the county to Indians. As late as 1972, the North Carolina Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights held hearings in Robeson County on "the Economic and Political Problems of Indians in Robeson County;" they found "limited job opportunities, obstacles to

full political participation and a 65 percent public school dropout rate for the county's 7,250 Indian students. (They also) found that nearly all of the Lumbee's problems are attributed in large degree to insensitivity or inaction on the part of county, state and federal governmental bodies."

Robeson County has also been charged under the 1965 Voting Rights Act with insensitivity to Indian and Black voters. White Robesonians fear a coalition of Indian and Black voters. Such a coalition would be extremely powerful because Blacks and Indians, as a result of roving voting registrars instituted in response to the Voting Rights Act, now have more registered voters in the county than whites have. The racial breakdown of registered voters as of October 7, 1974, was: white, 18,915; Black, 10,178; Indian, 13,597; other, 36.

The county contains six separate and distinct school systems: one for each of five cities and another for the rest of the county, which is not part of any city. Most of the county's Indians are under the Robeson County School System, which is about 70 percent Indian. In days past, "Double-voting" permitted residents of the five city units of Robeson County to vote in their own school board election and also in elections for the county school board. But residents of the county who did not live in a city could not vote in the school board election of any of the city school systems. As a result of "double-voting," city residents controlled the county school board. Only three Indians had been elected to the Robeson County Board of Education prior to the recent "breaking of double-voting" since the county was formed in the late 1700s. In the spirit of Henry Berry Lowry, Indians challenged "double-voting" in the courts. The courts found "double-voting" to be unconstitutional. "Double-voting" was broken. Today, thanks to "breaking double-voting" there is an Indian majority on the Robeson County Board of Education. And an Indian, Purnell Swett, is presently Superintendent of the Robeson County School System.

Yes, times are better now for the Indians in Robeson County than they were during and after the Civil War, when Henry Berry Lowry struck his mighty blow for freedom and dignity for all people. Those times were disjointed. Men were mad, and passion ruled. Brother fought brother. The North and the South squared off against one another. People took the law into their own hands, and blood was spilled in Robeson County.

A HISTORY OF THE LUMBEE INDIANS

The Lumbee Indians are the largest body of Indians east of the Mississippi. Two theories account for their origin. One is that the Lumbees are descendents of the Eastern Sioux, a loosely affiliated group of Indians who once dominated the southeastern quarter of North Carolina.

A more popular theory is that the Lumbee Indians are descendents of John White's Lost Colony, a British settlement that disappeared between 1587 and 1591 from the Virginia coast near Roanoke Island. This was the colony that produced Virginia Dare, the first British child born in the New World. The theory is that the colonists in time cohabited with the Hatteras Indians and other friendly tribes and produced the Lumbees. Evidence is adduced from the fact that the Lumbees, who number approximately forty thousand, have fewer than one hundred surnames, and almost half of these names have been found equally among members of the Lost Colony.

Clifton Oxendine wrote in a thesis on Lumbee Indian history in 1934 that ... "In 1730, Scotsmen began to arrive in what is now Robeson County. The universal tradition among the descendents of those first white settlers is that their ancestors found an Indian settlement on Lumber River (the river that meanders through Robeson County and from which the name "Lumbee" is derived). ... Those people were living in European-type homes, speaking the English language and tilling the soil when first discovered by the white man."

THE CRADLE OF DISCONTENT

Until 1835, Robeson County Indians enjoyed the same rights and privileges as their white neighbors in Robeson County. It was a busy time. Settlers were putting down roots, and they encountered little trouble from, Indian neighbors. The land seemed big enough for all shades and hues and kinds of people.

But in 1835 the ill wind that culminated in the Civil War began to stir. Institutions, ideals and even different life-styles came into question, and the South felt called upon to justify its institutions, such as slavery, and its general way of life. Refuge was sought in laws. In 1835, the state of North Carolina amended its constitution to deny Blacks and Indians the right to vote, bear arms, attend white schools and own property. In 1854, the General Assembly of North Carolina made it a criminal offense for Robeson County (Lumbee) Indians to marry outside their race.

In 1868, the Reconstruction Act restored the Lumbees the rights of citizenship but not the right to attend white schools. There were no Indians schools, and the Indians refused to attend the woefully inadequate black schools. They retreated into the swamps of Robeson County.

For fifty years, Indians born in Robeson County grew up in ignorance. That infamous period is deemed the blackest period in Lumbee history. It resulted, ironically, in an enmity between Indians and Blacks in Robeson County that is still felt. White politicians have used this enmity time and again to remain in power. But a change is occurring. Today, after a century of distrust, the Lumbee Indian is reaching out his hand to his Black brother.

In 1885 the North Carolina General Assembly passed an act naming the then nameless Indians of Robeson County "Croatan Indians" because the Lost Colonists had disappeared on Croatan Island. The act also established separate schools for Indians in Robeson County. Thus, after fifty years without public education, Robeson County Indians had a public school system. It was separate and woefully unequal and inadequate, but it was theirs!

In 1911, the state again renamed the Indians of Robeson County. They became the "Indians of Robeson County." Then, unbelievable as it is, in 1913 they were renamed the "Cherokee Indians of Robeson County." They didn't become the "Lumbee Indians of North Carolina" until 1953.

This history of imposed name changes suggests the discontent and search for an identity that produced Henry Berry Lowry. Before the legislative madness began, Indians had fought alongside white men in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. When the Civil War erupted, Robeson County Indians were denied the right to bear arms. Their discontent with their status upset the delicate social balance of Robeson County. The Indians grew restless.

HENRY BERRY LOWRY, THE CATALYST

In March, 1865 Henry Berry Lowry's father Allen, and his oldest brother, William, were tried by a large vigilante group of over one hundred whites who were angry and exasperated because of the eminent defeat of their "Cause." The 75-year-old Allen and his son were tried by the whites for allegedly receiving stolen goods. In Allen Lowry's smokehouse allegedly were found meat and other property said to belong to a Robert McKenzie, a white plantation owner who lived nearby. Animosity .W sprung up between the two men primarily because of the Union sympathies of Allen Lowry and his family. The Lowrys began harboring Union soldiers escaped from the nearby Confederate stockade in Florence, S.C. after the Confederacy turned down the Indians' attempts to enlist their services in the Confederate Army. Besides, McKenzie apparently wanted Lowry's land.

The Lowrys found guilty by the angry whites. Both the father and son were executed by the whites.

Henry Berry Lowry became a dangerous man. He grew silent and vengeful. The Civil War used up manpower as no previous war had. In the South, Indians and Blacks were conscripted to supply desperately needed labor. They were taken to Fort Fisher in Wilmington, North Carolina, where they built fortifications to protect the precious Cape Fear River, a main artery in the defense of the South. Many of Henry Berry Lowry's relatives and friends worked in the mosquito-infested port at Wilmington. According to Lew Barron, father of the author and Lumbee historian,

“escaping from the work gangs at the (Wilmington) seaport was the beginning of real resistance by the (Lumbee) people.” Many members of the band of rebels Henry Berry Lowry formed had escaped from Wilmington work gangs. His band also included two blacks -- Shoemaker John and George Applewhite -- and a smattering of runaway Union soldiers. The band was a haven for disenfranchised, desperate men.

The nucleus of Lowry's band was his older brothers, Tom and Steve; his brothers-in-law, Boss and Andrew; Henderson Oxendine, a cousin of Henry Berry's; and George Applewhite, a former slave who was married to Henderson Oxendine's sister. The other members of the band of avengers varied with the political climate.

Henry Berry Lowry was the vicious and unyielding leader. Some historians believe that Lowry was part Tuscarora Indian. He seems to have possessed many of the legendary fighting qualities of that tribe. Mary C. Norment, a local writer whose husband was allegedly killed by the band, said that Lowry “n was handsome when he was dressed up. His skin was copper in color and he was unaffected by either the cold or heat. His countenance is expressive in the highest degree of firmness, decision of character and courage. Generally he is reticent, a good listener, seldom talkative, manifesting in his demeanor little or no disposition at self-importance...”

He was always heavily armed. He could travel for long stretches of time and not grow weary. He was a child of nature, a man of the Robeson County swamps, which concealed him from his enemies for almost ten years. Without advantage, other than those given him by nature, he sought vengeance and retribution in his own way, impressing even his enemies with his power and influence as a brigand leader. He was never outmaneuvered or taken by surprise.

Like the rattlesnake, Lowry always warned before he struck. And most of those whom he warned fled the county to escape his wrath. White historians note that Lowry never insulted a white woman and never committed arson. White men in Robeson County put a high value on their women and their land.

Wanted by the authorities for the war-time murders of two prominent whites, Henry Berry Lowry took Rhoda Strong, a lovely Indian maiden, as his bride. Rhoda gave him strength and sustained him. Once, when the authorities managed to get Lowry in jail by the ruse of offering him safe passage from Robeson County, Rhoda helped her husband escape by smuggling him a revolver imbedded in a cake. He was never inside a jail again. Lowry took to the swamps and stayed there.

The Indians of Robeson County protected Henry Berry Lowry and his followers and tipped them off via a grapevine of friends and relatives whenever the Home Guard, militia, or state or federal agents seemed likely to capture any of them.

After the Civil War, the Radical Republicans, thought they never officially condoned the Lowry band, looked the other way most of the time. The political animosities of the Radical Republicans, who wanted to "punish the vanquished," played into Lowry's hand. The Democrats and traditionalists in Robeson County were the vanquished. They were also the targets of Lowry's vengeance, which continued unchecked for almost ten years.

The Lowry band was blamed for approximately thirty murders and countless robberies. They were ostracized. Henry Berry Lowry once said, "My band is big enough. They are all true men. We will live out our lives here, and if we must die, we will die game." Asked why he did not flee the county, especially while the Radical Republicans were in power, Lowry is purported to have said: "Where would I go? This is the only land I know. I will stay here."

THE ONLY LAND I KNOW is the title of a first-rate history of the Lumbee Indians by two Pembroke State University professors, Adolph Dial and David Eliades. Dial is a Lumbee.

After all the depravations, the ten-year reign of terror, the horror of the times, Henry Berry Lowry disappeared in 1872 and was never heard from again. The reward for his capture, dead or alive, is now twelve thousand dollars. When Lowry disappeared, his gang lost its inner strength and fell before the onslaught of the authorities. Within 2 years, it was decimated. The old traditionalists, the Democrats, slowly regained power in Robeson County. On the surface, things returned to normal, but they never were as they had been before Henry Berry Lowry took center stage in Robeson County.

Now, a hundred years after Lowry's disappearance, the Indians of Robeson County still ask: "Where did Henry Berry Lowry go? What became of him?" No one can say for sure.

One theory is that he left the county after a particularly profitable robbery. Some people say he went to Georgia, where he worked in the turpentine mills and lived a long, happy life. Some say he left the county with Sherman's troops after the war. Another theory says that he accidentally killed himself while cleaning his gun.

If anyone knew what became of Lowry, it was his wife Rhoda. But if she knew, Rhoda died with the secret in her heart.

I know where Henry Berry Lowry went. He seeped into the heart of every Lumbee Indian. He became the spirit, the firepower, in the rout of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1950s. He became the fighting spirit that drove the Indians who spearheaded the fight to save Old Main, a building on the Pembroke State University campus which came to symbolize the best of the Indian spirit. Old

Main once housed the only four-year, degree-conferring Indian college in America. After desegregation, university officials decided to tear down Old Main to make way for a new building. But Indians rallied to the cry: "Save Old Main." And the building still stands. Henry Berry Lowry is the catalyst for all positive and progressive change for the Lumbee Indians in Robeson County. He lives! He lives within our hearts. Long live Henry Berry Lowry!